NATION

RTI activist murder: Ex-BJP MP among 6 acquitted

≫ Page: 7 ≪

BUSINESS

Sensex closes flat, Nifty slips on profit by investors

≫ Page: 11 ≪

SPORTS

Rublev downs Aliassime to win Madrid Open title

≫ Page: 12 ≪

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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BENGALURU'S FORECAST

Yesterday
Min temp: 24°C
Max temp: 38°C

Today
Min temp: 24°C
Max temp: 38°C

11 CROORE TO VOTE IN PHASE 3 TODAY

It is a litmus test for Congress as BJP had won majority of these seats in the last election

AHMEDABAD/ BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Voting will be held in 93 constituencies spread over 11 states and Union Territories on Tuesday in the third phase of Lok Sabha polls. The stakes are high for BJP, which had won an overwhelming majority of these seats, including all in Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, in the last election.

Over 11 crore people will be eligible to vote in this phase.

The third phase saw BJP-led NDA and INDIA fiercely attacking each other on issues such as reservations and sexual harassment charges against JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP charge, asking Congress to give in writing that it will not hand over the quota for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes to Muslims.

The Congress and its allies accused the BJP of trying to tamper with the Constitution and do away with reservations.

Among the bigwigs are Union ministers Amit Shah (Gandhinagar), Jyotiraditya Scindia (Guna), Mansukh Mandaviya (Porbandar), Parshottam Rupala (Rajkot), Pralhad Joshi (Dharwad) and SP Singh Baghel (Agra).

With the BJP bagging Surat unopposed, 25 seats in Modi's home state of Gujarat will go to polls on 7 May, besides 11 seats in Maharashtra, 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh, the remaining 14 of the 28 in Karnataka, seven in Chhattisgarh, five in Bihar, four each in Assam and West Bengal, and all two in Goa.

Modi and Shah will cast their vote at booths in Ahmedabad city under the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat in Gujarat.

Former Madhya Pradesh chief ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Vidisha) and Digvijaya Singh (Rajgarh) have also returned to the Lok Sabha electoral fray this time.

A riveting contest is on in Maharashtra's Baramati between Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule and Sunetra Pawar, wife of the veteran leader's estranged nephew and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

In Uttar Pradesh, the current phase is important for the Mulayam Singh Yadav family, with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav aiming to retain the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat.

Aditya Yadav, the son of SP national general secretary Shivpal Yadav, is making his electoral debut from the Budaun Lok Sabha seat, which was represented by his cousin Dharmendra Yadav in 2014.

After the third phase, voting will be completed in 283 out of 543 seats in Lok Sabha.

The division of minority votes among the Left-Congress combine and the TMC and the narrative on the Citizenship Amendment Act could shape the outcome in the intense electoral battle in Maldaha Uttar, Maldaha Dakshin, Jangipur and Murshidabad.

—PTI

>>>More on Pages 2, 3, 4, 5 & 8

Election officials carry EVMs and other materials to polling booths on the eve of 3rd phase of voting for Lok Sabha elections in Kamrup district, Assam, on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

- Former Madhya Pradesh chief ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Vidisha) and Digvijaya Singh (Rajgarh) have also returned to the Lok Sabha electoral fray this time.

KARNATAKA NUMBERS

227 Total candidates
2.59 crore Total voters
28,269 Polling stations
1.45 lakh Polling officials

POLLING TIME
7am to 6pm

Max candidates: Davangere (30)
Least candidates: Raichur (8)

EC tells parties to take down fake news

Election Commission (EC) on Monday directed political parties to remove fake content from their social media platforms within three hours of such content being brought to their notice. This is part of directives issued by the poll panel to political parties for responsible and ethical use of social media in election campaigning to ensure a level playing field for all stakeholders after taking cognisance of certain violations by them.

PHOTO: PTI

NC suffers jolt in Ladakh as its entire Kargil unit resigns

KARGIL, 6 MAY

National Conference suffered a jolt in Ladakh Monday as its entire Kargil unit announced resignation in protest against the party leadership allegedly pressuring them to support Congress candidate from the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat as part of INDIA bloc's seat-sharing agreement. Former Jammu and Kashmir minister Qamar Ali Akhoon conveyed the unit's decision to party president Farooq Abdullah. According to the seat-sharing agreement between National Conference and Congress under INDIA bloc, Ladakh seat was given to Congress. Jan, the Kargil district president of the National Conference, was unanimous choice to fight as an independent.

—PTI

Farmer kills self over debts in Tumakuru

TUMAKURU, 6 MAY

A 38-year-old farmer committed suicide due to mounting debts in Chikkannanahalli village in Tovinakere gram panchayat in Tumakuru district on Monday. Rajanna's areca nut plantation was barren and desolate due to water shortage. He installed two tubewells over the last 10 days and seven over the last six years, but the consistent supply of water eluded him. Rajanna has taken several loans and creditors have been incessantly demanding repayment in recent days. Besieged by pressure and despair, the farmer hanged from a tamarind tree on Monday. Koratagere police registered a case.

—Salar News

Rains lash City; traffic chaos ensues

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Bengaluru heaved a sigh of relief as rains lashed the City on Monday. Mercury touched 34 degree Celsius even as Rajmahal Guttahalli in Bengaluru West Zone, received the highest rainfall at 39.50 mm, according to the government portal Bengaluru VarunaMitra. Maruti Mandir ward in West Zone saw lowest rainfall at 11mm.

Parts of Bengaluru North, South East and Central regions also witnessed hailstorms. India Meteorological Department has predicted rains in the City till 11 May.

Traffic hit

However, the rains also exposed the City's poor infrastructure as many areas suffered waterlogging. This further added to the traffic chaos on a day when many people were travelling to their hometowns in 14 districts to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha elections on Tuesday.

While few electric poles broke down in Hennur Main Road, cars were damaged near Coles Park after trees fell.

Tree falls were also reported in 13 places, including Lingarajapuram Main Road, Mekhri Circle, Jayamahal Road, and other areas

—Salar News

Cars are damaged as trees fall after heavy rains near Coles Park, in Bengaluru on Monday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

CISCE DISCONTINUES MERIT LISTS FOR CLASS 10, 12 EXAMS

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) has discontinued merit lists for Class 10 and 12 exams from this year to avoid unhealthy competition among students, board officials said on Monday. The pass percentage saw a marginal increase from last year.

CBSE had last year stopped the practice of announcing merit lists. During the pandemic, when board exams were not conducted due to closure of schools and students were marked using alternative evaluation methods. Karnataka's Madhurya M Belagodu starred in the list of highest scorers with 99 per cent followed by Prakruti R Koppal who scored 98.4 per cent. The other students who were on the list are: Dhruva Prasad (98.2 per cent), Panchami Nayak (98 per cent) and Sarah Olivia (98 per cent).

—Salar News

LG WANTS KEJRI PROBED OVER KHALISTANI LINK

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena has recommended an NIA probe against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. This was for allegedly receiving political funding from the banned terrorist organisation 'Sikhs for Justice', Raj Niwas sources said on Monday.

AAP alleged that the recommendation is "yet another conspiracy" against Kejriwal at the behest of BJP.

In a letter to the Union Home secretary, Saxena said he had received a complaint that the Kejriwal-led AAP allegedly received USD 16 million funding from extremist Khalistani groups for facilitating the release of Devendra Pal Bhullar.

Bhullar, who is in Amritsar Central Jail, was convicted in the killing of nine people in a bomb blast in 1993 in Delhi. The complaint refers to a video released by Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, where he alleged that the Kejriwal-led AAP received USD 16 million from Khalistani groups between 2014 and 2022, sources said.

—Salar News

>>>More on Page 8

Court gags media over Prajwal scandal

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Prajwal Revanna ***PHOTO: PTI***

Bengaluru Civil and Sessions Court on Monday temporarily restrained 82 media houses from publishing "false news" against former prime minister HD Deve Gowda and his son HD Kumaraswamy in Prajwal Revanna's video case.

Deve Gowda, and Kumaraswamy obtained the injunction order preventing the use of their names during news reporting over the Prajwal's sex scandal and the kidnapping case involving his father MLA HD Revanna.

The court came down heavily on the media and said that anything about the duo cannot be aired unless there is evidence against them. However, the order also clarifies that platforms such as Google, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are not restrained from publishing or telecasting news related to the case.

In their petition, the father-son duo noted their respected family background and political history spanning over 70 years. They stated that there are no allegations against them. Deve Gowda and Kumaraswamy have distanced themselves from Revanna and his family, asserting that despite their public statements to this effect, media outlets continue to unfairly link them to the issue. Hassan Lok Sabha MP Prajwal has been booked on allegations of sexual assault of multiple women. The case was lodged on the basis of over 2,900 videos depicting the sexual assault of several women, which were recently circulated on social media. A City court remanded Sathish Babanna, an aide of Revanna, to eight days police custody on Monday in abduction and illegal confinement of a woman. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday held discussions with state police chief Alok Mohan amid efforts to bring back JDS MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, to the country.

—Salar News

>>>More on Page 6

AFTER 5 DECADES

City's Cauvery Theatre downs its curtains

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

After five decades of entertaining audiences, Bengaluru's iconic Cauvery Theatre has screened its final feature. The single-screen cinema, located on Sankey Road, wasn't just known for the films it screened; it boasted a large screen, ample parking and affordable ticket prices.

Cauvery Theatre opened its doors on 11 January, 1974, with the Kannada classic 'Bangarada Panjara' starring Rajkumar. Prakash Narasimhaiah, the owner of the theatre, told Salar News "It has been a long ride from the day I opened this theatre 50 years back. I am a movie lover from the start and that is what drove me to construct this place."

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Suresh Kumar, the owner of a tea stall near the theatre, told Salar News "Me and my father have been here for almost 25 years. When we heard that this theatre was being shut down, we felt as if we were losing something personal. No matter what is being constructed here, it would not be the same as the theatre."

SThe theatre will be demolished to make way for a software complex. "The rise of streaming services has dealt a blow to single-screen theatres," Narasimhaiah said.

"People's viewing habits have changed, and they prefer to wait for movies to be released online, especially since the pandemic. My father, late SN Moorthy was the architect of the theatre" said Spoorthy Moorthy, son of the theatre's architect.

The closure of Cauvery Theatre has left a void in the community. Ramesh K, a resident of Malleshwaram, said, "Cauvery was a Bengaluru institution. It's a shame to see it go, but times change. I'll miss the big screen experience." Similarly, Anu, a college student said, "I wish they could have found a way to preserve it."

Other than Cauvery Theatre, Kapali (2017), Pallavi (2012), Tribhuvan (2016), Sagar (2013) and Everest (2023) are some of the other single-screen theatres that were shut down in the City in recent times.

—Salar News

RANCHI'S BIGGEST RAID

₹25 crore found in raids linked to J'khand min

RANCHI, 6 MAY

Enforcement Directorate on Monday claimed to have recovered a huge amount of "unaccounted" cash during searches at the premises of a domestic help allegedly linked to the secretary of Jharkhand minister Alamgir Alam.

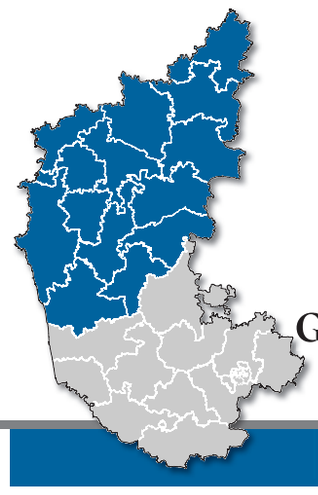
This is one of the biggest raids that took place in Ranchi. Videos and photos shared by the sources showed officials of the central probe agency taking out wads of currency notes from large bags in a room located in a building at Gadikhana Chowk.

A domestic help of Jharkhand Rural Development Minister Alam's personal secretary Sanjiv Lal is alleged to be residing at this location.When contacted by PTI, Alam said, "I have no official information regarding this so far." ED sources said the note-counting machines have been deployed to count the cash to ascertain the exact amount. The searches are linked to a money laundering case against the former chief engineer of the rural development department, Veerendra Kumar Ram, who was arrested by ED last year. The money laundering case against Ram stems from a complaint of the Jharkhand anti-corruption bureau. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

K'TAKA ENTERS INTENSE PHASE 3

Greenhorns have raised the poll heat in Karnataka as they face veterans. 2.6 crore voters will decide their fate in 14 districts



SHIVAMOGGA

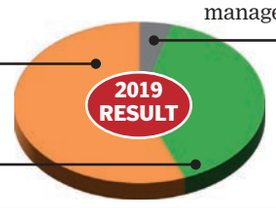
Assembly segments
Shivamogga Rural, Shivamogga, Bhadravati, Tirthahalli, Shikaripura, Sorab, Sagar and Byndoor

Know your constituency
Shivamogga has dominated politics and produced 4 chief ministers and 1 deputy chief minister. Out of 19 elections, Congress won 11 times and BJP 6. Since 2009, the seat has been the stronghold of BS Yediyurappa. There is significant presence of SC/STs, Lingayats, Deevaru (Ediga) and Muslims. It will witness a three-way fight between children of two ex-CMs and a rebel.

Total voters: **17.29 lakh**
Male **8.52 lakh**
Female **8.77 lakh**
Others: **33**

KEY ISSUES

- The region houses Western Ghats and there is a need to balance development with environmental conservation. The plan to make Shivamogga a smart city threatens the fragile Western Ghats, which is also drying up due to decrease in rainfall.
- The city has poor infrastructure and waste management. Residents have also called for better traffic management.



KEY PLAYERS

BY RAGHAVENDRA (50)

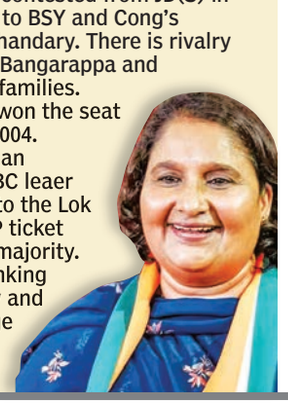
PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 73.71 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	1
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

The current BJP MP has been fielded again from this seat. However, Raghavendra — the son of Yediyurappa and elder brother of BJP State President BY Vijayendra — might face trouble after former deputy chief minister and OBC leader KS Eshwarappa rebelled and chose to contest as an Independent to "fight the family of politics". Eshwarappa blames the family for his son KE Kantesh not getting a ticket from Haveri.

GEETHA SHIVARAJKUMAR (59)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 89.06 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	EDIGA

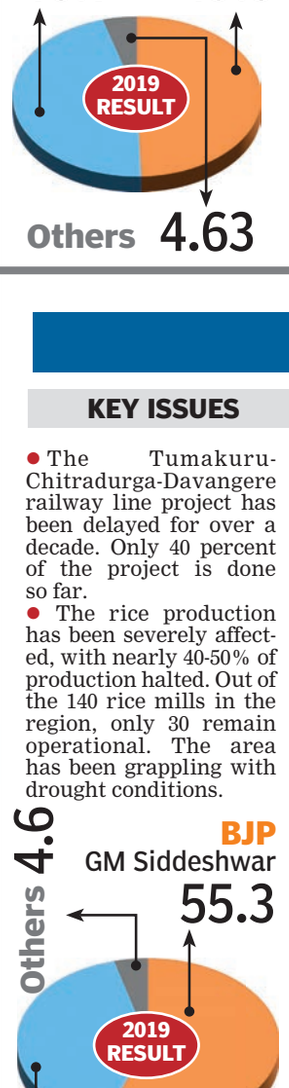
Geetha, the daughter of former CM late S Bangarappa and sister of Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa, contested from JD(S) in 2014 but lost to BSY and Cong's Manjunath Bhandary. There is rivalry between the Bangarappa and Yediyuraapa families. Bangarappa won the seat from BJP in 2004. Bangarappa, an influential OBC leaer was elected to the Lok Sabha on BJP ticket with a large majority. Geetha is banking on her family and father's image to win.



KOPPAL

KEY ISSUES

- The lift irrigation project to provide drinking water to 20 villages in Yelburga taluk from Krishna river was slated for inauguration in 2023 under the BJP led by Basavaraj Bommai. However, due to the state elections, the project remains halted.
- Since 2021, India's inaugural toy cluster project in Koppal is yet to commence. This cluster can house 100 manufacturing units, potentially creating 25,000 direct jobs and one lakh indirect jobs.



Assembly segments
Sindhanur, Maski, Kushtagi, Kanakgiri, Gangavati, Yelburga, Koppal, and Siruguppa

Know your constituency
In 1957, Koppal became part of Mysore State and it transitioned to Karnataka in 1977. Agriculture serves as the main source for Koppal's economy. The region is dominated by Lingayats and OBCs. A Congress' stronghold in 2009, it was taken over by BJP's win in 2014 and 2019. BJP relies on the backing of mining magnate Gali Janardhan Reddy, who wields influence in the Ballari and Koppal regions. Reddy previously left BJP to form his party, Karnataka Rajya Pragati Paksha. He rejoined BJP in 2024.

KEY PLAYERS

K RAJASHEKAR BASAVARAJ HITNAL (44)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	PUC
ASSETS:	RS 29.04 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	3
COMMUNITY:	KURUBA

Businessman K Rajasekhar Hitnal previously contested against BJP in 2019 but lost. His father, Basavaraj Hitnal, also faced defeat against BJP in 2014. However, Karadi Sanganna, the BJP candidate who narrowly defeated both the father and son in the elections, now has switched to Congress. This will benefit Hitnal.

BASAVARAJ KYAVATUR (48)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	MS
ASSETS:	RS 14.13 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	KURUBA

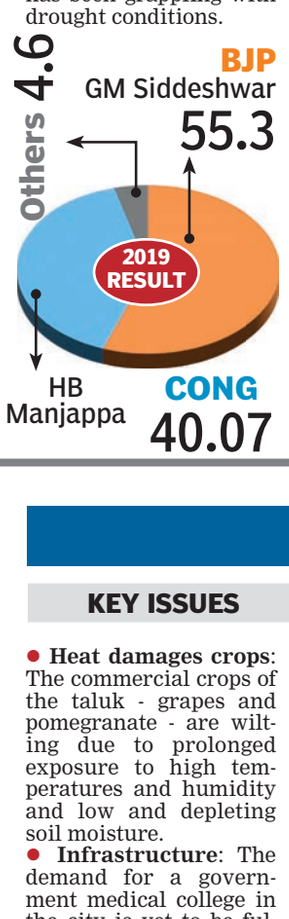
Basavaraj Kyavatur, a joint replacement and orthopaedic surgeon and son of the former Kushtagi MLA K Sharanappa, will make his debut for the first time in the Lok Sabha election

Total voters: **18.51 lakh**
Male **9.13 lakh**
Female **9.38 lakh**
Others: **132**

DAVANGERE

KEY ISSUES

- The Tumakuru-Chitradurga-Davangere railway line project has been delayed for over a decade. Only 40 percent of the project is done so far.
- The rice production has been severely affected, with nearly 40-50% of production halted. Out of the 140 rice mills in the region, only 30 remain operational. The area has been grappling with drought conditions.



Assembly segments
Jagalur, Harapanahalli, Harihar, Davangere North, Davangere South, Mayakonda, Channagiri, and Honnali

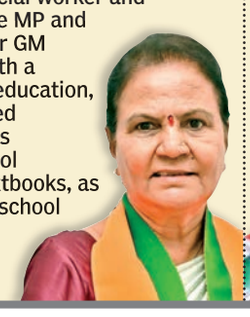
Know your constituency
Davangere constituency was established in 1977 and is dominated by Veerashaiva Lingayat community. It has seen a longstanding political rivalry between the families of Davangere MP GM Siddeshwara and veteran Congress leader and MLA Shamanur Shivashankarappa for nearly three decades.

KEY PLAYERS

GS GAYATHRI (69)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	PUC
ASSETS:	RS 67.80 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	VEERASHAIVA LINGAYAT

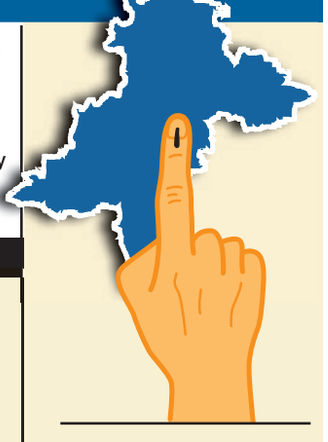
Gayathri Siddeshwara is an entrepreneur, social worker and the wife of 4-time MP and ex-Union minister GM Siddeshwara. With a strong focus on education, she has prioritised initiatives such as distributing school uniforms and textbooks, as well as covering school fees for underprivileged children.



PRABHA MALLIKARJUN (48)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 241.28 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	VEERASHAIVA

Mallikarjun is making her electoral debut in this constituency. She is an educationist, philanthropist and the daughter-in-law of veteran Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa. She introduced Bapuji Health cards, which provides subsidised healthcare for BPL citizens.



Total voters: **16.91 lakh**
Male **8.44 lakh**
Female **8.47 lakh**
Others: **133**

KALABURAGI

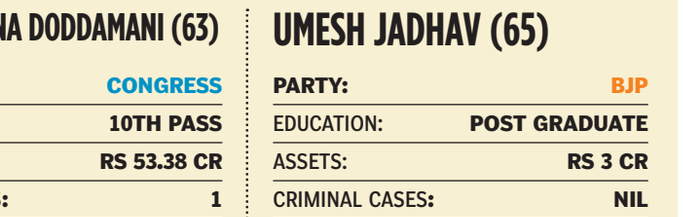
Assembly segments
Chittapur, Kalaburagi-North, Kalaburagi-South, Kalaburagi-Rural, Sedam, Jewargi, and Afzalpur and Gurmitkal

Know your constituency
It was created before the first general elections in 1951. This was considered a safe seat for Congress until 2019 when Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge was defeated by BJP's Umesh Jadhav. Of the 8 seats, 6 are represented by Congress. Over 7 lakh voters are Lingayats.

Total voters: **20.79 lakh**
Male **10.40 lakh**
Female **10.38 lakh**
Others: **273**

KEY ISSUES

- There is anger against parties over failure to tackle droughts or floods almost every year. The farmers are not getting remunerative prices for tur.
- Kalaburagi lacks robust infrastructure such as transportation, healthcare and educational institutions.
- Per capita income is lower than the state average.



KEY PLAYERS

RADHAKRISHNA DODDAMANI (63)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	10TH PASS
ASSETS:	RS 53.38 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	1
COMMUNITY:	SC

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's son-in-law is making his electoral debut. For a win, he is banking on the Kharge name and the government's guarantee schemes. Congress is also promising on bringing amendments to Article 371J of the Constitution for Kalyana Karnataka.

UMESH JADHAV (65)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	POST GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 3 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	SC

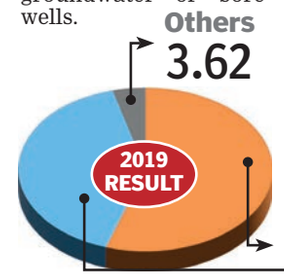
The current MP jumped ship from Congress to BJP. A doctor, he is going strong on the Hindutva card and riding on the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to win. BJP has promised to launch a mega textile park in Kalaburagi, which will give employment to 3 lakh people.

*2019 results show vote share in percentage

BAGALKOT

KEY ISSUES

- **Heat damages crops**: The commercial crops of the taluk - grapes and pomegranate - are wilting due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures and humidity and low and depleting soil moisture.
- **Infrastructure**: The demand for a government medical college in the city is yet to be fulfilled. The new township Navanagar created for commercial activities is yet to get facilities.
- **Water scarcity**: The administration in north Karnataka's Bagalkot district has done woefully little to conserve water under Jal Shakti Abhiyan. Hungund taluk is even more water-stressed, with a meagre rainfall throughout the year and next to no groundwater or borewells.



Assembly segments
Bilgi, Basavana Bagevadi, Muddebihal, Hungund, Badami

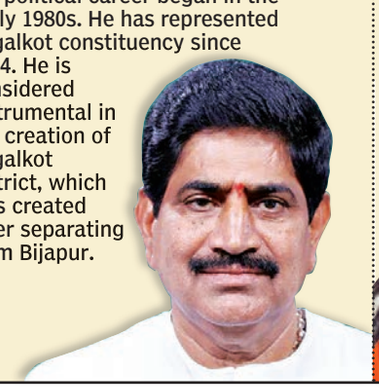
Know your constituency
The constituency came into existence in 1967. Freedom fighter Sangangouda Basanagouda Patil was the first MP. After independence, the seat was initially part of the Bombay State and was known as the Bijapur South seat. Congress won 8 times until 2019, while BJP won four times.

KEY PLAYERS

PC GADDIGOUDAR (68)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	BA & LLB
ASSETS:	RS 4.39 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	HINDU

His political career began in the early 1980s. He has represented Bagalkot constituency since 2004. He is considered instrumental in the creation of Bagalkot district, which was created after separating from Bijapur.



SAMYUKTA S PATIL (30)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	BA LLB
ASSETS:	RS 3.96 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	HINDU

The young lawyer is the daughter of Minister Shivanand Patil. She is a fresh face fighting a BJP veteran. Her campaign pitch has been the establishment of a textile park and leveraging world-tourist attractions such as Badami, Pattadkal and Aihole. If she wins, she will be the 1st woman MP from Bagalkot.

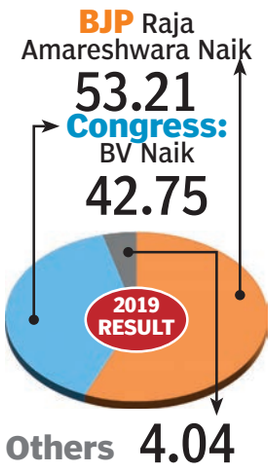
Total voters: **17.90 lakh**
Male **8.87 lakh**
Female **9.02 lakh**
Others: **99**

RAICHUR

KEY ISSUES

● **Water issues:** Despite being a doab between two converging rivers, Krishna and Tungabhadra, Raichur is facing an acute drinking water crisis as the rivers and reservoirs have almost dried up.

● **Unemployment:** With NREGA being a key source of income, especially for women here, the failure of the State to provide work under the guaranteed job scheme in many villages has emerged as a concern.



Assembly segments

Raichur Urban, Raichur Rural, Devadurga, Manvi, Lingasugur, Yadgir, Shahapur, Shorapur.

Know your constituency

Raichur was a part of Hyderabad State until re-organisation of Karnataka in 1956. It was integrated in 1977. Kurubas are Siddaramaiah's loyal vote bank and account for 3.15 lakh votes.

KEY PLAYERS

RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK (66)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	LLB
ASSETS:	RS 8.9 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	ST

Naik's political career began with the Indian National Congress. He served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for the first term from 1989 to 1994.

G KUMAR NAIK (60)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	ENGINEER
ASSETS:	RS 33.41 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	ST

Kumar Naik is a 1990 batch IAS officer and has played an active role in implementing total literacy campaign in Mysuru and Uttara Karnataka. He served as Deputy Commissioner of Raichur between 1990 and 2002 and post-retirement he joined the Congress.

Total voters: **19.9 lakh**

Male **9.85 lakh**

Female **10.05 lakh**

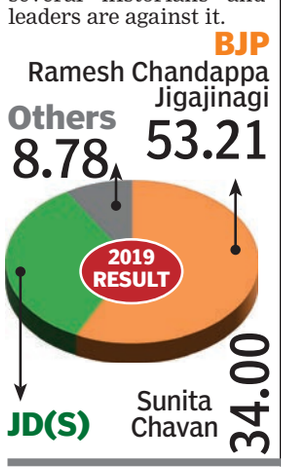
Others: **297**

VIJAYAPURA

KEY ISSUES

● **Acute water shortage:** Prolonged drought in Vijayapura and Bagalkot has left crops withering. Congress legislator Yashavanta Rayagoud Patil has accused the government of not addressing the issue. Also there is lack of adequate cold storage or processing units for horticultural crops.

● **Name change row:** Congress renamed Bijapur as Vijayapura in 2014. But the government wants to again rename it after social reformer Basaveshwar, although several historians and leaders are against it.



Assembly segments

Muddebihal, Devar Hippargi, Basavana Bagevadi, Babaleshwar, Vijayapura City, Nagthan, Indi and Sindagi

Know your constituency

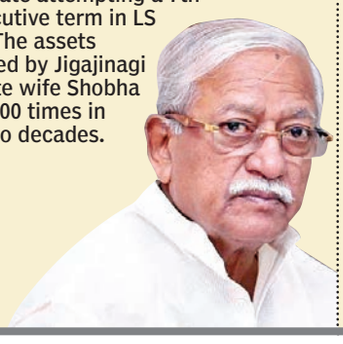
This LS seat was once a stronghold of Congress, but from 90s, BJP began to gain ground. This seat was initially part of Bombay (Mumbai) and then Mysuru. It was included in Karnataka in 1977. Out of 17 LS elections held here, Congress won 9 times, while BJP won 5 times.

KEY PLAYERS

RAMESH JIGAJINAGI (71)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 57 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	DALIT (MADIGA)

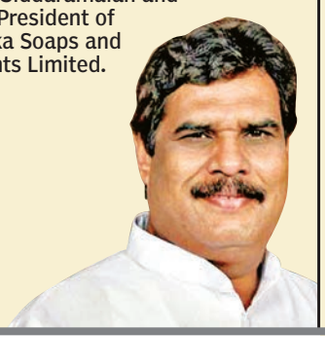
He is facing a major challenge as Madiga sect has 30,000 voters while his opponent's Chalavadi sect has 2 lakh voters. Jigajinagi is the only candidate attempting a 7th consecutive term in LS polls. The assets acquired by Jigajinagi and late wife Shobha grew 100 times in last two decades.



RAJU ALGUR (64)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 13.9 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	1
COMMUNITY:	DALIT (CHALAVADI)

A leader of the Dalit Sangharsh Committee of the undivided district, Raju became an MLA in 2014. He also served as political secretary to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and was the President of Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited.



Total voters: **19.31 lakh**

Male **9.81 lakh**

Female **9.49 lakh**

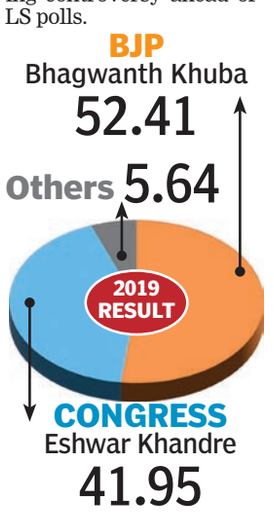
Others: **206**

BIDAR

KEY ISSUES

● **Farmer suicides:** In 2023, at least 35 farmer suicides were reported. Tur crops were destroyed due to erratic monsoons and farmers were not compensated or given crop insurance either.

● **DCC bank raid:** District Co-operative Central Bank, headed by Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre's brother Amarkumar Khandre, was raided in 2024, sparking controversy ahead of LS polls.



Assembly segments

Chincholi, Aland, Basavakalyan, Humnabad, Bidar South, Bidar, Bhalki and Aurad

Know your constituency

The constituency is on the border of Telangana and Maharashtra. A quarter of the total population is SCs, and 11.17 per cent of the population are STs. It was a stronghold of Congress, but BJP has been a winner for 7 times. So far, 18 elections have taken place.
The constituency is seeing a battle between two Lingayat candidates.

KEY PLAYERS

BHAGWANTH KHUBA (56)

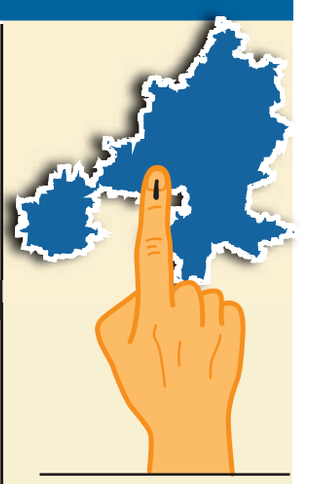
PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 6 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

It is a tough fight for Khuba, the man who defeated late former chief minister N Dharam Singh in 2014. His own partymen have turned against him, accusing him of working against the party. He has also been accused of being biased towards Maharashtra.

SAGAR KHANDRE (26)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 14 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

Sagar is the son of Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre. He is the 4th member of his family who has entered politics. Sagar served as secretary of National Students' Union of India and looked after the campaign of his father in 2018 and 2023 Assembly elections.



Total voters: **19.91 lakh**

Male **9.85 lakh**

Female **10.05 lakh**

Others: **101**

*2019 results show vote share in percentage

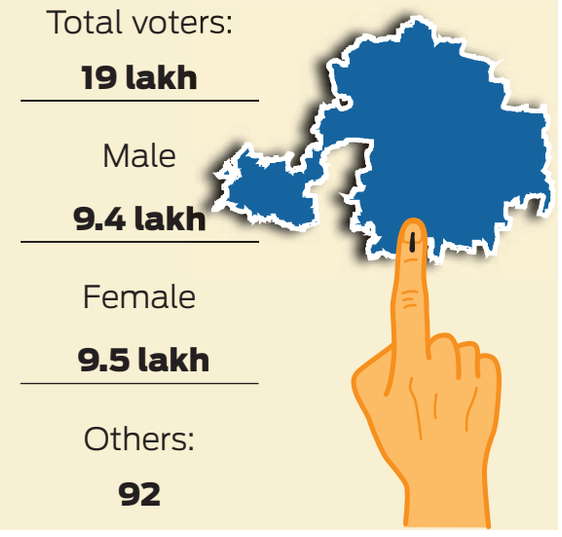
BELAGAVI

Assembly segments

Arabhavi, Gokak, Belagavi Uttar, Belagavi Dakshin,Belagavi Rural,Bailhongal,Saundatti Yellamma, Ramdurg

Know your constituency

Belagavi has a strong BJP presence since 2004 with the late Suresh Angadi winning on the trot, followed by his wife in the 2021 bypolls The border issues with Maharashtra and Lingayat politics could play spoilsport as Belagavi region has been divided along caste lines. Feudal politics and sugar barons have a major role in the district. Both BJP and Congress candidates belong to the Lingayat communitywhich forms 17-18 per cent of the population.



Total voters: **19 lakh**

Male **9.4 lakh**

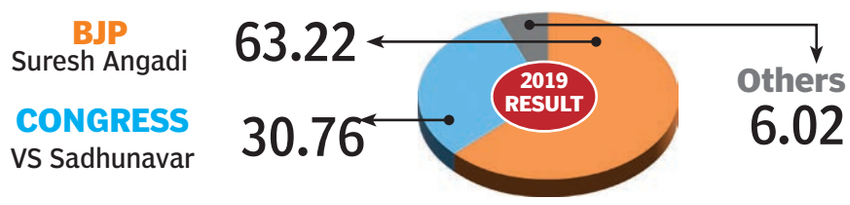
Female **9.5 lakh**

Others: **92**

KEY ISSUES

● **Water crisis:** The district faces shortage of water with depleted water levels in both Hidkal Dam and Renuka Sagar reservoirs due to drought.
In response, local authorities have begun to supply water once a week instead of once in 3-4 days.

● **Karnataka-Maharashtra border row:** The border issue dates back to 1957 when states were reorganised on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim to Belagavi as it has a sizeable Marathi-speaking population. Last October, Belagavi administration banned three Maharashtra ministers and an MP from entering the district as they were to participate in the "black day" event organised by Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES) on 1 November, Karnataka formation day.
MES however has been demanding the merger of Maratha-speaking areas in Karnataka with Maharashtra.

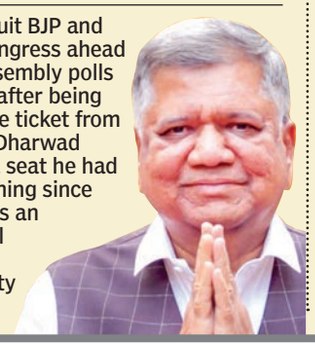


KEY PLAYERS

JAGADISH SHETTAR (68)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	LLB
ASSETS:	RS 13.4 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

Shettar quit BJP and joined Congress ahead of the Assembly polls last year after being denied the ticket from Hubballi-Dharwad Central, a seat he had been winning since 2008. He is an influential Lingayat community leader.



MRINAL HEBBALKAR (31)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	CIVIL ENGINEER
ASSETS:	RS 13.9 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

He is the son of State Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar. Friends-turned-foes Laxmi and former BJP minister Ramesh Jarkiholi both want to take control of the district.

UTTARA KANNADA

Assembly segments

Khanapur, Kittur, Haliyal, Karwar, Kumta, Bhatkal, Sirsi, and Yellapur.

Know your constituency

Maratha community has a strong foothold in the region. The constituency is considered as the bastion of BJP. The fishermen's community form about 80,000 voters in the seat, and they lean largely towards BJP. It also has a sizeable Lingayat vote bank, which BJP expects a significant chunk of votes from.

Total voters: **16.2 lakh**

Male **8.18 lakh**

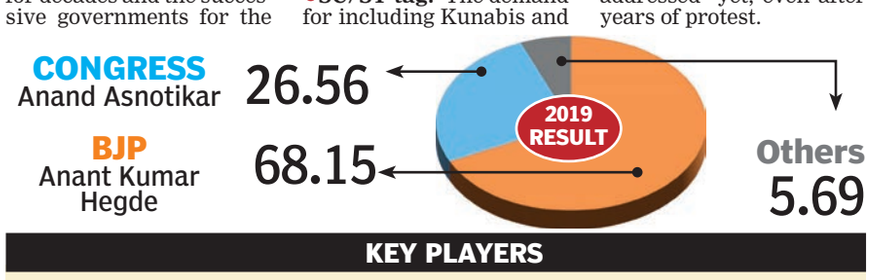
Female **8.10 lakh**

Others: **14**

KEY ISSUES

● **Lack of a super-specialty hospital:** People have blamed Anantkumar Hegde, the incumbent MP, for decades and the successive governments for the lack of medical facilities. People are forced to go to Mysuru or Mangaluru.

● **SC/ST tag:** The demand for including Kunabis and Halakki Vokkaligas under the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category is an ongoing issue and has not been addressed yet, even after years of protest.



KEY PLAYERS

ANJALI NIMBALKAR (47)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	MS IN GYNAECOLOGY
ASSETS:	RS 15.8 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	1
COMMUNITY:	HINDU-MARATHA

Nimbalkar is a doctor by profession. She has been vocal against the Karnataka Ministers Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which proposed to enhance salaries and allowances of legislators, ministers and Chief Ministers.

VISHWESHWAR KAGERI(63)

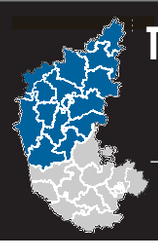
PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 16.7 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NA
COMMUNITY:	HAVYAKA BRAHMIN

Kageri served as a minister and Speaker in the Karnataka Assembly and this is the first time that he is facing a Lok Sabha election. He was chosen over six-term MP, Anantkumar Hegde who was dropped.

RICHEST CANDIDATE

PRABHA MALLIKARJUN, Congress, Davangere | RS 241.28 CR

Out of the 227 candidates, 69 (30 per cent) candidates have assets worth more than Rs 1 crore. Congress and BJP have 14 crorepatis each.



TOTAL CANDIDATES

206 Men

21 Women

YOUNGEST CANDIDATE

SAGAR KHANDRE (26)
Congress, Bidar

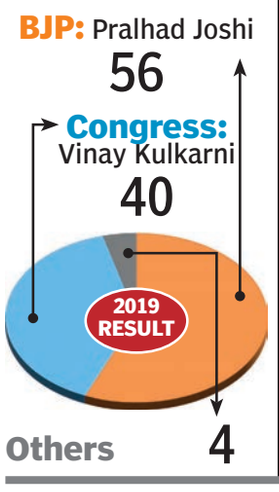
OLDEST CANDIDATE

RAMESH JIGAJINAGI (71)
BJP, Vijayapura

DHARWAD

KEY ISSUES

- **Water issues:** Successive governments have failed to resolve the issue revolving around the Kalasa- Banduri Project that would provide drinking water to 13 towns of Dharwad and other neighbouring districts.
- **Basic amenities:** Despite requests to government from industrialists, industries lack basic amenities. Female workers face difficulties working at night due to lack of street lights on the roads.



Assembly Segments

Navalgund, Kundgol, Dharwad Dharwad Central, Dharwad West, Kalghatgi, Shiggaon, Dharwad-East.

Know your constituency

Dharwad constituency has been a BJP stronghold with the saffron party winning seven times in a row since 1996. The LS constituency was created as part of 2008 constituency delimination process.

KEY PLAYERS

VINOD ASOOTI (34)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 16 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	KURUBA

The youth leader and political greenhorn is in for a tough fight against the BJP veteran. Asooti is banking on Congress' five guarantees to bag a win and is also considered a close aide of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. He has support of the AHINDA group (an acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits).

PRALHAD JOSHI (61)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 21 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	BRAHMIN

Incumbent MP Joshi is gearing up for his fourth poll bid. He has been winning from here since 2004. However, he faced trouble when Lingayat seers wanted him out of Dharwad polls for disrespecting religious heads. Fakira Dingaleshwar Swami of Shirahatti Fakkireshwar Mutt initially threatened to contest against Joshi, but he backed out later Joshi has Lingayat votes.

Total voters: **18.6 lakh**

Male **9.5 lakh**

Female **9 lakh**

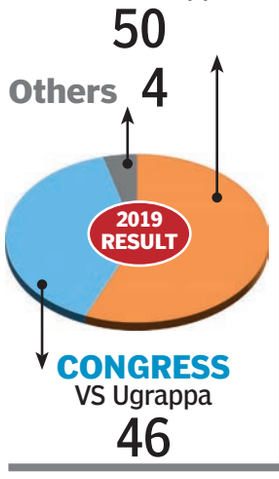
Others: **98**

*2019 results show vote share in percentage

BALLARI

KEY ISSUES

- **Power cuts:** Irregular load shedding affects the denim hub of Ballari, hitting families who rely on jeans production. Many garment manufacturing units worry about increasing operational costs and thereby declining productions.
- **Illegal mining**: A Lokayukta report in 2011 revealed shocking details of illegal mining in the district raising deep concerns. People also suffer from various health issues due to mining.



Assembly Segments

Hadagalli, Hagaribommanahalli, Vijayanagara, Kudligi, Kampli, Ballari, Ballari City, Sandur.

Know your constituency

Till November 1956 it was under Madras Presidency. BJP has been holding the Ballari seat since 2004, except for six months in 2019 when Congress' Ugrappa won the bypoll. This constituency is reserved for the candidates belonging to Schedule Tribes after the delimitation exercise in 2008. Observers say Ballari will see a tough fight.

KEY PLAYERS

B SRIRAMULU (53)

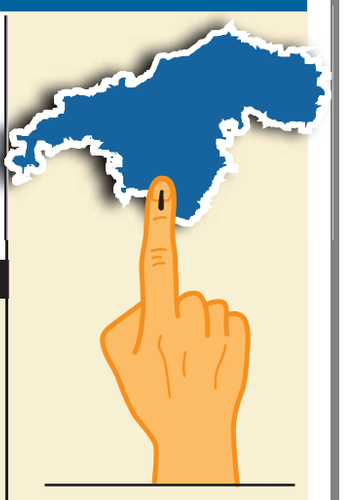
PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 70 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	5
COMMUNITY:	VALMIKI

Sriramulu is a former Health and Family Welfare and Transport Minister. He had quit his position as cabinet minister and had been sidelined by the BJP over his association with Reddy brothers after the illegal mining scandal surfaced.

E TUKARAM (57)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 3 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	VALMIKI

Tukaram was the Minister of Medical Education in HD Kumaraswamy's ministry, He is banking on his 'clean image' and Congress' guarantees. He is also backed by Kuruba, SCs and other minorities.



Total voters: **18.65 lakh**

Male **9.2 lakh**

Female **9.45 lakh**

Others: **266**

HIGHEST NUMBER OF VOTERS KALABURAGI 20.9 LAKH

LOWEST NUMBER OF VOTERS UTTARA KANNADA 16.4 LAKH

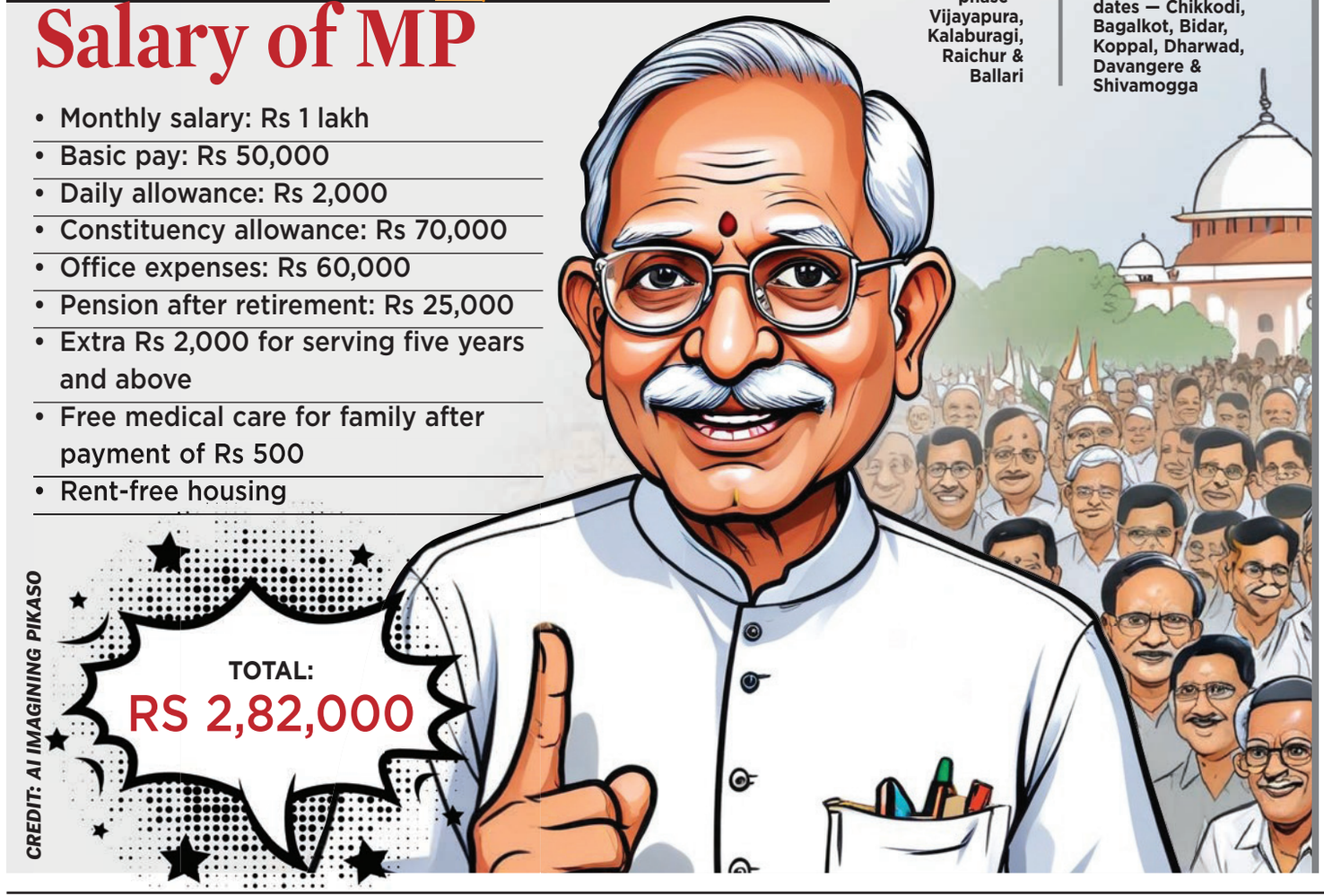
4 No. of reserved seats in this phase— Vijayapura, Kalaburagi, Raichur & Ballari

7 Constituencies with 15 or more candidates — Chikkodi, Bagalkot, Bidar, Koppal, Dharwad, Davangere & Shivamogga

Salary of MP

- Monthly salary: Rs 1 lakh
- Basic pay: Rs 50,000
- Daily allowance: Rs 2,000
- Constituency allowance: Rs 70,000
- Office expenses: Rs 60,000
- Pension after retirement: Rs 25,000
- Extra Rs 2,000 for serving five years and above
- Free medical care for family after payment of Rs 500
- Rent-free housing

TOTAL: RS 2,82,000



CREDIT: AI IMAGINING PIKASO

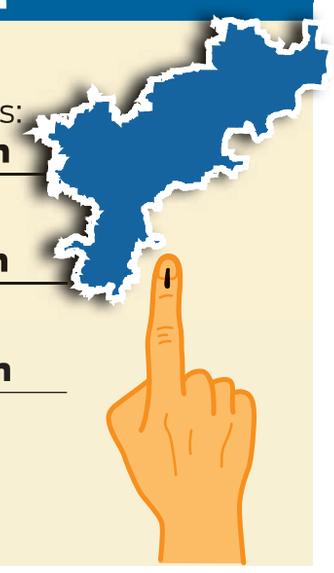
CHIKKODI

Assembly Segments

Nippani, Chikkodi-Sadalga, Athani, Kagawad, Kudachi, Raibag, Hukkeri, and Yemkanmardi.

Know your constituency

Of the 16 Lok Sabha elections held in Chikkodi since 1957, only two families have held the Member of Parliament seat in 10 elections in the constituency. Chikkodi that was SC Reserved till 2004 was changed to general category from 2009 elections. It is a border district between Karnataka and Maharastra and is a battleground for BJP and Congress.



Total voters: **17.41 lakh**

Male **8.75 lakh**

Female **8.65 lakh**

Others: **74**

KEY ISSUES

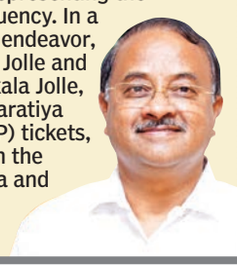
- **Division of the district:** Advocates of the proposed division argue that establishing Chikkodi and Gokak as independent districts would streamline administrative operations, potentially addressing long-standing concerns about effective governance in the region.
- **Infrastructure problems:** Following State government's decision in 2017 to establish Chikkodi as a separate educational district from Belagavi, deputy directors of the Pre-University Board were to oversee 343 colleges across both districts. However, lack of proper infrastructure is a concern.

KEY PLAYERS

ANNASAHEB S JOLLE (60)

PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	12TH PASS
ASSETS:	RS 54 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

Annasaheb Shankar Jolle serves as the incumbent Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, representing the Chikkodi constituency. In a notable political endeavor, both Annasaheb Jolle and his wife, Shashikala Jolle, contested on Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) tickets, vying for seats in the Chikkodi-Sadalga and Nippani constituencies.



PRIYANKA JARKIHOLI (27)

PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	MBA
ASSETS:	RS 9 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	ST

Priyanka, daughter of PWD minister and KPCC working president Satish Jarkiholi, would be one of the youngest MPs if she wins. She aims to focus on tourism and help women start businesses. The social worker is set for a tough fight against the BJP veteran. She is the only girl child of the five Jarkiholi brothers.

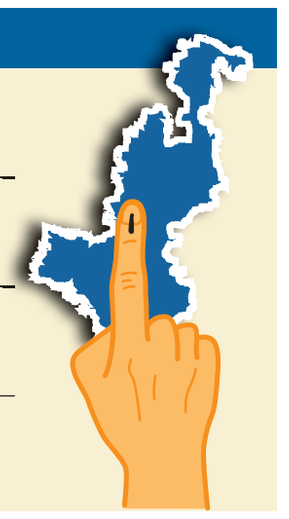
HAVERI

Assembly Segments

Shirahatti, Gadag, Ron, Hangal, Haveri, Byadgi, Hirekerur, Ranibennur.

Know your constituency

It was established in 2008 as part of the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies. Its first elections were held in 2009, and since then, it has been represented by Shivkumar Chanabasappa Udasi of the BJP.



Total voters: **17.77 lakh**

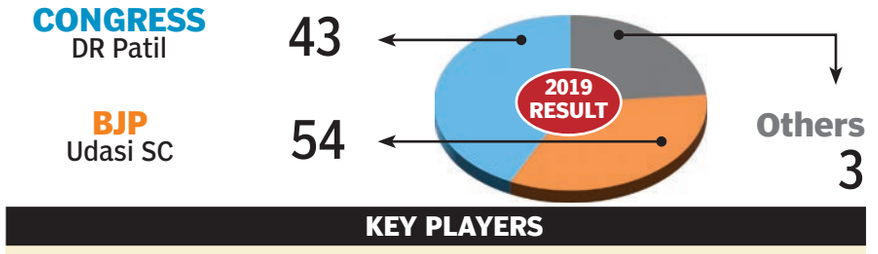
Male **8.95 lakh**

Female **8.82 lakh**

Others: **81**

KEY ISSUES

- **Depletion of underground water table:** Haveri district is grappling with mounting worries regarding the diminishing underground water levels. The severe lack of rainfall this year has resulted in a substantial decrease, with the groundwater level plummeting from 6.95 metres in October 2019 to 11.05 metres in 2023.



KEY PLAYERS

ANANDASWAMY G (46)

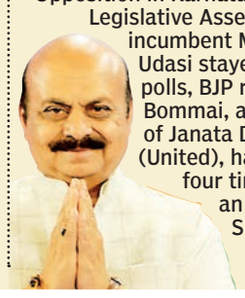
PARTY:	CONGRESS
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 56 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	1
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

A newcomer, Anandaswamy Gaddadevaramath, has been selected to run in the upcoming Lok Sabha election representing the Haveri constituency. Anandswamy, the son of former Congress MLA GS Gaddadevaramath from Shirahatti, has previously contested in two elections without success. While the Congress is hopeful in seven out of eight assembly segments, BJP is vouching for Bommai's political influence.

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI (64)

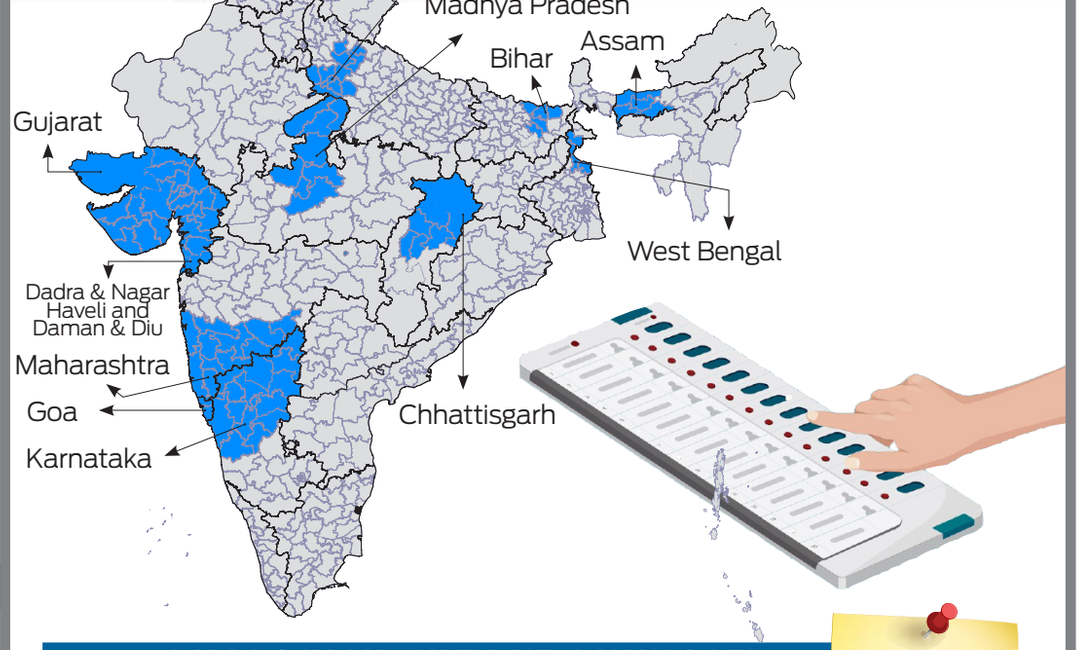
PARTY:	BJP
EDUCATION:	GRADUATE
ASSETS:	RS 53 CR
CRIMINAL CASES:	NIL
COMMUNITY:	LINGAYAT

Basavaraj Somappa Bommai was the 23rd Chief Minister from 2021 to 2023, and was Interim Leader of the Opposition in Karnataka Legislative Assembly. As incumbent MP Shivakumar Udasi stayed away from polls, BJP roped in Bommai. Bommai, a former member of Janata Dal and Janata Dal (United), has been elected four times since 2008 as an MLA for Shiggaon.



93 seats go to polls amid blazing heat

Voters will decide the fate of 1,351 candidates, of whom 123 are women



ASSAM

NO OF CANDIDATES: 47

Phases: 3 | Phase 3 seats: 4

Constituencies: Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Barpeta, Guwahati

KEY PLAYERS

BADRUDDIN AJMAL, AIUDF
Seat: Dhubri

Maulana Badruddin Ajmal is a businessman, politician, philanthropist and Islamic theologian from Assam. He is the state President of Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind for Assam. He has been a Member of the Lok Sabha from Dhubri since 2009. He is also the Founder and President of the All India United Democratic Front since 2005.

MIRA BARTHAKUR GOSWAMI, Congress
Seat: Guwahati

A debutant candidate and a former BJP member, Mira Borthakur Goswami, 51, has been one of the strongest critics of BJP, the party she was expelled from in 2018. She has also been one of the most visible leaders of Congress, which she joined in 2021.

BIHAR

NO OF CANDIDATES: 54

Phases: 7 | Phase 3 seats: 5

Constituencies: Jhanjharpur, Supaul, Araria, Madhepura, Khagaria

KEY PLAYERS

MOHAMMED SHAHNAWAZ ALAM, RJD
Seat: Araria

The youngest son of ex-Union Minister of State for Home Taslimuddin, Shahnawaz has had a checkered career being a part of AIMIM before rejoining RJD in 2022. He is loved by locals for being accessible to everyone on short notice.

RAMPRIT MANDAL, JD(U)
Seat: Jhanjharpur

Ramprit Mandal is an MP in the 17th Lok Sabha from Jhanjharpur. He won the 2019 LS election as a Janata Dal (United) candidate. He has been renominated by his party for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

CHHATTISGARH

NO OF CANDIDATES: 168

Phases: 3 | Phase 3 seats: 7

Constituencies: Surguja, Raigarh, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Bilaspur, Durg, Raipur

KEY PLAYERS

JYOTSNA MAHANT, Congress
Seat: Korba

Jyotsna Mahant, 70, has been involved with multiple development projects in the region for over four decades as a social worker. She was elected to the Lok Sabha from Korba in the 2019 general election from the Congress.

VIJAY BAGHEL, BJP
Seat: Durg

Vijay contested 2003 Assembly polls from Patan as an NCP candidate but lost to his uncle Bhupesh Baghel. He was first elected to Lok Sabha in 2019 from Durg after he defeated his closest rival Pratima Chandrakar from Congress.

THE COST OF ELECTIONS

In 2024, Election Commission of India is spending over ₹1,00,000 crore to conduct polls in the world's largest democracy. The cost of elections has seen a significant rise from ₹10.5 cr in 1952 to ₹50,000 crore in 2019. Here is the total cost for LS polls conducted till 2014:

Year	Total expenditure (In Rs cr)	Expenditure per elector (In Rs cr)
2014	3,870.3	41.6
2009	1,114.4	12
2004	1,016.1	17
1999	947.7	15
1998	666.2	11
1996	597.34	10
1991	359.1	7
1989	154.22	3.1
1984	81.51	2
1980	54.77	1.5
1977	23.04	0.7
1971	11.61	0.4
1967	10.8	0.4
1962	7.32	0.3
1957	5.9	0.3
1952	10.45	0.6

Source: ECI

DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI AND DAMAN & DIU

NO OF CANDIDATES: 12

Phases: 1
Phase 3 seats: 2

Constituencies: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu

KEY PLAYERS

LALUBHAI PATEL, BJP
Seat: Daman and Diu

A BJP veteran, Lalubhai Patel was elected to Lok Sabha for the first time in the 2009 general election. He was subsequently re-elected in 2014 and 2019 from the Daman and Diu. He is seeking his fourth re-election in 2024.

KETAN DAHYABHAI PATEL, Congress
Seat: Dadra and Nagar Haveli

Son of a senior Cong MP, Patel has been in the news for amassing assets more than his known sources of income. In 2017, CBI raided his home & farmhouse based on complaints written to the govt accusing him of corruption.

GOA

NO OF CANDIDATES: 16

Phases: 1
Phase 3 seats: 2

Constituencies: North Goa, South Goa

KEY PLAYERS

SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK, BJP
Seat: North Goa

Currently serving as the Minister of State for Tourism and Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Naik is known for his controversial statement that diseases like cancer could be cured through yoga. He is currently seeking a re-election from North Goa.

VIRIATO FERNANDES, Congress
Seat: South Goa

Known for his controversial stand on dual citizenship for the Goans, Captain Viriato Fernandes is a retired Naval officer and a Kargil War veteran. He is known to have told Rahul Gandhi that the Constitution of India was forced upon the Goan people.

WEST BENGAL

NO OF CANDIDATES: 57

Phases: 7
Phase 3 seats: 4

Constituencies: Maldaha Uttar, Maldaha Dakshin, Jangipur, Murshidabad

KEY PLAYERS

ABU TAHER KHAN, TMC
Seat: Murshidabad

He is an agriculturalist and social worker. He was an ex-legislator from Congress. In 2019, he stood for LS elections from Murshidabad from TMC, an election he won by defeating his nearest rival Abu Hena from Congress.

DHANANJAY GHOSH, BJP
Seat: Jangipur

With over 14 lakh voters, the seat has earned a negative tag for recording the maximum cases of poll-related violence. Ghosh, a greenhorn in electoral politics, is depending on further consolidation of the Hindu votes to work in his favour.

GUJARAT

NO OF CANDIDATES: 266

Phases: 1 | Phase 3 seats: 25

Constituencies: Kachchh, Banaskantha, Patan, Mahesana, Sabarkantha, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad East, Ahmedabad West, Surendranagar, Rajkot, Porbandar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Anand, Kheda, Panchmahal, Dahod, Vadodara, Chhota Udaipur, Bharuch, Bardoli, Navsari and Valsad.

KEY PLAYERS

AMIT SHAH, BJP
Seat: Gandhinagar

A chief strategist of BJP and a close aide of PM Narendra Modi, Shah is currently serving as the 31st Union Home Minister. He was also the 10th prez of BJP from 2014 to 2020. He has also been the chairman of the NDA since 2014.

AMITBHAI CHAVDA, Congress
Seat: Anand

An old Congress loyalist, Chavda was elected as Borsad and Anklav MLA in 2012, 2017, and 2022. He was appointed as the president of GPCC in 2018.

MADHYA PRADESH

NO OF CANDIDATES: 127

Phases: 4 | Phase 3 seats: 8

Constituencies: Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Vidisha, Bhopal, Rajgarh

KEY PLAYERS

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA, BJP
Seat: Guna

Switching sides to BJP in 2020, he quickly rose through the ranks, becoming an RS member and even securing a spot in the Union Cabinet with a Civil Aviation portfolio. He has won four times from here.

DIGVIJAYA SINGH, Congress
Seat: Rajghar

Loaded with a diverse profile ranging from 10 years as CM to Cong general secretary to RS MP, the 77-year-old 'Raja Saheb' is now pitted against 2-term BJP MP Rodmal Nagar, who won the seat in 2019 by 4.31L votes in his home turf.

MAHARASHTRA

NO OF CANDIDATES: 258

Phases: 5 | Phase 3 seats: 11

Constituencies: Raigad, Baramati, Osmanabad, Latur, Solapur, Madha, Sangli, Satara, Ratnagiri - Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Hatkanangle

KEY PLAYERS

SUPRIYA SULE, NCP-SCP
Seat: Baramati

Sule, the daughter of NCP Chief Sharad Pawar, has represented the seat since 2009. She is the working NCP Prez. The seat will see a Pawar vs Pawar fight as Sule is pitted against sister-in-law Sunetra Pawar—NCP Ajit faction candidate.

NARAYAN RANE , BJP
Seat: Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg

Starting his political career as a local Shakha Pramukh in Mumbai, Rane climbed the ladder to become M'rashtra CM and then leader of Oppn. He is currently the Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

UTTAR PRADESH

NO OF CANDIDATES: 100

Phases: 7 | Phase 3 seats: 10

Constituencies: Sambhal, Hathras, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Badaun, Aonla, Bareilly

KEY PLAYERS

DIMPLE YADAV, Samajwadi Party
Seat: Mainpuri

She is the daughter-in-law of Mulayam Singh Yadav, ex-Defence Minister, ex-UP CM and founder of Samajwadi Party. She is SP prez & ex-UP CM Akhilesh Yadav's wife. She is the incumbent MP.

SP BAGHEL, BJP
Seat: Agra

A popular party-hopper, Baghel, is the incumbent MP from Agra. He was in SP, on whose ticket he got elected to LS thrice, and RS once. He was suspended from SP in 2010 after which he joined BSP. He is now contesing from BJP.

PHOTO: PTI

EC identifies 325 booths as sensitive in Shivamogga

SHIVAMOGGA, 6 MAY

Shivamogga is all set to vote on Tuesday. The district has 17,52,885 eligible voters, comprising 8,62,789 males and 8,90,061 females. To encourage voter turnout, Election Commission (EC) has announced initiatives such as the establishment of 40 Sakhi polling stations, eight booths dedicated to youth, eight for specially-abled people, and 8 mission-based stations. The polling body has identified 325 booths as sensitive and 87 as ultra-sensitive. EC has prioritised basic amenities such as drinking water, toilets, and electricity at all 2,039 polling stations. To beat the blazing heat amid soaring temperatures, arrangements for shade, restrooms, and medical kits have been made to prevent heatstroke among voters. Electrolyte drinks and medical treatment will be available to those in need along with voting guides and special greeting letters. To maintain law and order, the sale of liquor has been banned in the district from 6 am on Monday to midnight on 7 May. Furthermore, check post inspections have been intensified to curb illicit activities. At least 19 crore in cash and items have been seized so far.
—Salar News

PHOTO: PTI

3 arrested in Mandya over illegal abortions

MANDYA, 6 MAY

A joint operation led by district health officer Mohan, taluk health officer Arvind, and the Pandavapura local police raided the health department quarters in Mandya. The raid was followed under the suspicion of unlawful activities related to gender detection and illegal abortions in the quarters. Three people were arrested in the raid. A Mysuru woman who had recently undergone a miscarriage amid the illicit operations was rescued by the team. The crackdown yielded significant evidence, including abortion machines, implicating those involved in unlawful " activities.
—Salar News

Man threatens mother-in-law from jail

MYSURU, 6 MAY

A murder accused lodged in Mysuru Central jail who is undertrial has allegedly issued death threats to his mother-in-law. The accused Krishna, is currently incarcerated in connection with a murder charge. However, despite being behind bars, Krishna reportedly made a threatening phone call to his mother-in-law, Devamma, residing in Rammanahalli. He threatened to harm her upon his release from prison. According to the complaint lodged by Devamma with Mysuru South Rural Police Station, Krishna allegedly threatened her demanding compliance with his demands upon his release. He also insisted that his wife, Aishwarya, accompany him upon his release. Furthermore, Krishna purportedly sought to disavow any association with Aishwarya if she chose not to comply with his wishes, emphasizing that she should be formally disowned through a written declaration. He also threatened to forcibly reclaim any gold and jewellery bestowed upon Aishwarya during their marriage. *—Salar News*

BJP, Cong lock horns again in 14 seats

It is going to be a straight fight between Congress and BJP in the Northern districts

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Congress and BJP will lock horns on the electoral battleground again in less than a fortnight in Karnataka. This is as the stage is set for the second phase of elections in the 14 remaining Lok Sabha seats on Tuesday.

It is going to be a straight fight between Congress and BJP in the northern districts. The JD(S) is not contesting in these seats and is supporting its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partner -- BJP.

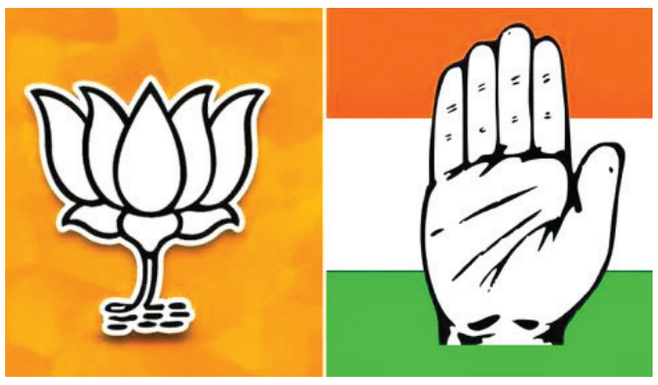
The State has a total of 28 Lok Sabha constituencies. The first phase of polling in 14 seats was held on 26 April.

The segments where elections will be held on Tuesday are Chikkodi, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Vijaypura, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Bidar, Koppal, Ballari, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davangere and Shivamogga.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, BJP had swept all these 14 seats, defeating Congress and JD(S), which were in alliance and ruling the state then.

Karnataka is the most important state for BJP in south India as it's only here that it has held power in the past.

Speaking to PTI, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena said adequate security arrangements have been made for Tuesday's polling. "Around 35,000 civil police personnel, 65 companies of Central Paramilitary forces and armed police of other states will be deployed for the polling day," he said.



In 2019, BJP had swept all the 14 seats going to polls today PHOTO: PTI

Besides this, 4,000 micro-observers will also be on duty and 17,000 polling stations will be covered by webcasting, he added.

Congress's performance in the elections, especially in the second phase which covers almost all Lingayat-dominated districts, is crucial, as the party did not win one of them in 2019, and to also check whether the grand old party has managed to retain the support of a section of Lingayats -- considered as the BJP's core vote-base -- which seemed to have somewhat shifted towards it in the 2023 Assembly polls.Lok Sabha election is being seen as a big test of sorts for Congress state unit chief DK Shivakumar, who has made no secret of his ambition to become chief minister, amid speculations of change in guard mid-way of the Assembly term. The stakes are also high for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, as victory in this election is seen as key to strengthening his hands, analysts say. It is also seen as a "litmus test" for State BJP President BY Vijayendra, who has the onerous task of helping the party retain its supremacy in Lok Sabha polls, by regaining its traditional Lingayat vote base. Ensuring a BJP sweep is paramount for the son of veteran leader BS Yediyurappa, to consolidate his position and silence critics who have questioned his selection to the post, overlooking seniors and seasoned hands. *—PTI*

SHOWERS OF RELIEF

Heavy rain lashes Cubbon Road in Bengaluru on Monday, bringing relief from the dry spell and scorching heat PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Kharge's son-in-law accused of ₹800 cr scam

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

PHOTO: PTI

Former corporator NR Ramesh alleged that Radhakrishna Doddamani, the son-in-law of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Kalaburagi candidate, took over Rs 800 crore bribes to allocate seats in Dr BR Ambedkar Medical College.

Ramesh released a 900-page document over the allegations and filed complaints with Lokayukta and Crime Investigation Department, seeking a probe. Ramesh's document accuses Doddamani, along with HS Mahadeva Prasad, Murali Mohan, and Kuber Amanullah Khan of taking bribes for seat allocation. Ramesh accuses Khan, a close associate of Doddamani and an employee at a medical college, of selling seats to students who failed their Pre-University examinations (PU). It is alleged that the six students have already been granted seats illegally.

It is further alleged that Khan has been illicitly accepting money from affluent individuals across the state and country, promising MBBS and BDS seats at the college.

However, IT-BT Minister, Priyank Kharge denied the allegations. *—Salar News*

SC to hear in July Karnataka's drought fund plea

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Monday said it will hear in July a plea filed by the Karnataka government seeking a direction to the Centre to release financial assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to the state for drought management.

The Centre had on 29 April told the apex court that around Rs 3,400 crore has been released to the Karnataka government for drought management. The matter came up for hearing on Monday before a bench of justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Karnataka government, said the state will file an affidavit in the matter. *—PTI*

PRAJWAL'S SEX SCANDAL

Govt starts helpline for sexual abuse victims

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Special Investigation Team probing the alleged sexual harassment of women by Hassan JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna has come out with a helpline number for the victims to approach them.

SIT chief and Additional Director General of Police BK Singh said in a statement the victims can call 6360938947.

Singh said the victims need not have to visit the SIT office as the team would personally approach them to offer them relief.

SIT also warned people at large not to share the videos showing women being sexually assaulted and molested allegedly by Revanna on social media or personal messenger applications.

"It is easy to trace people sharing these videos on messenger services, so action will be taken against such individuals," Singh said.

He also noted that sharing such videos would damage the reputation and honour of victims.

Prajwal Revanna PHOTO: PTI

Prajwal is seeking re-election from Hassan as a JD(S)-BJP alliance candidate.

Prajwal reportedly left the country on 27 April, a day after the polling, and a blue corner notice has been issued against him.

While rape and molestation cases have been registered against Prajwal, his father and MLA HD Revanna has been arrested and remanded to police custody for kidnapping a woman allegedly sexually assaulted by the 33-year-old MP. *—PTI*

Never instigated victims, claims Cong MLA

MYSURU, 6 MAY

KR Nagar Congress MLA Ravishankar on Monday refuted claims of instigating the mother and son to file a kidnapping case against MLA HD Revanna. JD(S) District President Lingesh accused the Congress MLA of meeting the duo and forcing them to file a case against Revanna.

Speaking to reporters, Ravishankar said that he had not engaged in any communication with them. He dismissed Lingesh's allegations as baseless. Ravishankar claimed that he was not in town when the incident occurred. *—Salar News*

SIT inspects Revanna's residence

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Special Investigation Team probing the case against JD(S) MLA HD Revanna in the alleged kidnapping and illegal confining of a woman carried out a spot inspection at his residence at Basavanagudi in Bengaluru on Monday.

In the absence of the Revanna family, the SIT team summoned his lawyer, Gopal, for the inspection.

Two days ago, the SIT inspected the MLA's house at Holenarasipura in Hassan. Revanna, son of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, is facing two cases. One pertains to the molestation of the cook in which Revanna's son Prajwal is also accused.

The second one is a kidnapping case registered on 2 May. The victim's son charged that Revanna's aide Sathish Babanna took his mother on a bike on 29 April and put her in confinement after videos surfaced showing Prajwal allegedly tying and raping her.

The woman has been rescued. The police team is going around the places where she was allegedly sexually brutalised.

Many explicit videos and photographs of several women have surfaced who were allegedly raped, molested and filmed by Prajwal.The SIT took the two complainants to various locations where the rape and molestation took place.

Meanwhile, Revanna's lawyer Gopal alleged that the SIT team did not let him inside the JD(S) leader's Basavanagudi house. *—PTI*

BJP shares video of DKS 'slapping' Congress worker

HAVERI, 6 MAY

A purported video of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is surfacing on social media in which is seen 'slapping' a Congress worker during a roadshow in Savanur of Haveri.

The video of the incident has been shared by the BJP on X.

Video shows the assault PHOTO: X/@BJP KARNATAKA

The incident took place when Shivakumar was campaigning for Congress candidate Vinoda Asooti.

In the video, Shivakumar can be seen coming out of his car and is surrounded by a large number of Congress workers. One of the Congress workers tried to put his hands on Shivakumar's shoulders and posed with the camera for the picture. He immediately removed his hand and slapped him.

The man is Allauddin Maniar, a municipal member. "DK Shivakumar slaps Congress Municipal Member Allauddin Maniar. This is not the first time DK has assaulted a Congress worker." "I wonder why Congress workers even want to work for Congress? Their leaders slap and humiliate them, don't give them tickets to contest" he added.
—ANI

Historians KR Narasimhan and Dhanpal have deciphered a 1407AD stone inscription in Bengaluru Rural PHOTO: SALAR

Historians decipher 600-yr-old inscription

DEEPTHI R KOLAR
BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Retired joint director of the Department of Collegiate Education and historian KR Narasimhan and historian Dhanpal have deciphered a stone inscription dating back to 1407 which was found near Doddajala village in Devanahalli taluk of Bengaluru rural district.

The reference to the inscription is mentioned in Epigraphia Carnatica, a set of books on epigraphy compiled by Benjamin Lewis Rice. It is mentioned in volume 9 under No 56 during 1905, Narasimhan said. The 600-year-old inscription, which speaks of land donation, was lying in a tank bed for decades. Narasimhan and Dhanpaul could access the inscription when the stone was taken out during the construction of Sri Muthylamma temple in the village.

The inscription reads that a land donation was made to Bheemasetty by Kattige Amaranayaka during the tenure of Veetaprathap Devaraya Odeyar on 18 September 1407. A total extent of three Kanduga and 30 Kolagas of land was given as a donation to Bheemasetty, the inscription reads. Kanduga and kolagas are the measurements used during those days and they are normally found only in inscriptions of yesteryears, said Arivu Shivappa, lecturer and a historian in Kolar.

Bheemasetty was the Nadaprabhu of Yelahanka which has been detailed in another two inscriptions found near Nuggegalli village of Channarayapattana taluk of Hassan district, Narasimhan said. A group of villagers including advocate Srinivas and GP members Nagesh and Munivenkatappa assisted them. *—Salar News*

BETTING KNOCKS ALL-OUT

Hundreds in City lose money in IPL betting

DANIEL GEORGE
BENGALURU, 6 MAY

With Indian Premier League 2024 coming to the last stages the next weekend, hundreds of people have lost lakhs of rupees in betting this year.

The gangs in Bengaluru manage online betting using laptops and mobile phones and contact clients via WhatsApp.

Salar News spoke to those mainly from below the poverty line who had lost substantial money on this year's IPL betting. Subanna (name changed), a restaurant employee earning Rs 20,000 per month, said: "This IPL, I just began betting for fun and made some money initially and got hooked on it. I began borrowing money from friends and relatives and now I have debts to the tune of Rs 2 lakh. I am at wit's end as to how I am going to pay back these loans. My earnest appeal to youngsters is please do not resort to betting I feel this entire drama is fixed."

Gangs in Bengaluru manage online betting using laptops and mobile phones PHOTO: PTI

Pradeep (name changed), an employee of a vegetable shop, said: "I lost around Rs 5 lakh last year in betting and I had to sell off my wife's jewellery to pay off my debts. This year I thought I would bet on a few matches and ended up losing more than Rs 3.5 lakh."

A large number of those who placed bets in this year's IPL have mortgaged their cars with financiers in the City. Several cars including high-end cars are lying in yards belonging to financiers in most parts of the City. S Harish, a financer from Challakere, said: "I have got more than 50 two-wheelers and 15 cars which have been mortgaged with me by those who placed bets on IPL this year. In all probability, they would not be able to redeem their vehicles back as there is a time frame after which we would sell it off since the documents pertaining to the vehicles have already been signed by the vehicle owners."

Last month, Ranjitha, 23, a homemaker, was found hanging at her residence in Chitradurga. Police investigation revealed that her husband Darshan Babu, assistant engineer, was into cricket betting and had a debt of over Rs 1 crore. Betting websites often don't require users to register with original Aadhaar cards or other ID proofs, facilitating anonymity in transactions. This makes it difficult for police officers to track them.
—Salar News

PHOTO: PTI

Storm hits Meghalaya, 400 people affected

SHILLONG, 6 MAY

Several houses were damaged and more than 400 people affected as a storm accompanied by heavy rains lashed several villages in Meghalaya's Khasi Jaintia Hills region, officials said on Monday.The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall in the region for another 48 hours, they said. "At least 427 people were affected as their homes were destroyed or partially destroyed in at least 13 villages of Khasi Jaintia Hills region of Meghalaya on Sunday," a senior disaster management official told PTI. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said the district administration is working on a war footing to provide relief to the affected people.—*PTI*

Kerala NIT student ends life on campus

KOZHIKODE, 6 MAY

A student of National Institute of Technology allegedly ended his life by jumping from a building inside the campus in this north Kerala district on Monday. Kunnamangalam police said the deceased was identified as Yogeswar Nath, who was from outside Kerala. "Prima facie, it is a case of suicide. He was found dead after jumping from the building. It is suspected that he took the extreme step at around 5.30am," a police official said. Further details can be disclosed only after a detailed investigation, the official added.—*PTI*

NEET: Case filed against man for sending proxy

THANE, 6 MAY

Police have registered a case against a 20-year-old student from Rajasthan for allegedly making a proxy candidate appear in place of her at the NEET medical entrance exam in Navi Mumbai in Maharashtra, an official said on Monday. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) was held on Sunday and the fraud came to light at an examination centre at the CBD Belapur in Navi Mumbai, he said. Based on a complaint by an official at the examination centre, a case was registered on Sunday against the student from Bhiwadi in Rajasthan under Indian Penal Code sections 419 (cheating by personation) and 34 (act done by several persons in furtherance of a common intention) and other relevant provisions, the official from CBD Belapur police station said. A probe was on into the case, the police added.—*PTI*

4 kids, teen driver killed after tractor overturns in MP

JABALPUR, 6 MAY

Four children and a tractor driver were killed, and two others were injured when a tractor-trolley overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Monday, police said. The accident occurred in Tinheta Deori village under Chargavan police station limits in the morning, city superintendent of police (CSP) Sunil Nema told PTI. an 18-year-old driving the tractor-trolley were killed, while two children sustained injuries, he said. The children were transporting a water tank to a wedding, the official said. The driver was operating the tractor recklessly and lost control, causing it to overturn, he said. Additional superintendent of police Suryakant Sharma said Anup Barkade,12, Rajveer Gond,13, Devendra Barkade,15, Lucky Markam,10, and Dharmendra Thakur, who was driving the tractor, were killed.—*PTI*

RTI activist murder: Ex-BJP MP among 6 acquitted

Amit Jethwa was shot dead outside court premises in 2010

AHMEDABAD, 6 MAY

The Gujarat High Court on Monday allowed the appeals of former BJP MP Dinu Solanki and six others against their conviction by a CBI court in the case of RTI activist Amit Jethwa's murder in 2010.

Observing that the trial court conducted proceedings with a "predetermined notion of conviction," a division bench of Justices AS Supehia and Vimal K Vyas quashed the CBI court's order sentencing Solanki and the six others to life imprisonment.

Jethwa was shot dead outside the High Court premises here on 20 July, 2010.

Solanki and six others were sentenced to life imprisonment by the CBI court in 2019 and ordered to pay a fine of Rs 15 lakh in the case of murder and criminal conspiracy.

The High Court had later suspended the life sentences of Dinu Solanki and his nephew Shiva Solanki, who was also convicted in the case.

"We reiterate that the entire investigation right from the inception of the offence appears to be perfunctory and prejudiced. The prosecution has failed to secure the confidence of the witnesses," the High Court bench said in its order.

Gujarat High Court on Monday allowed the appeals of former BJP MP Dinu Solanki in Amit Jethwa murder case PHOTO: PTI

The trial court on a "preconceived notion of conviction has analysed the evidence divorced from statutes and legal precedence," it said.

The High Court said the trial court was duty-bound to apply the law as written, "not as per its instinct".

"Resultantly the common judgment on order of conviction dated 11 July, 2019 passed by the special judge, CBI court...whereby the accused have been convicted for the offence under section 302 (murder) and section 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and are sentenced is quashed and set aside," the High Court order said.

- Solanki and six others were sentenced to life imprisonment by the CBI court in 2019 and ordered to pay a fine of Rs 15 lakh in the case of murder and criminal conspiracy

The High Court further observed that the survival of democracy and the unity and integrity of the nation depends upon the realisation that "constitutional morality is no less essential than constitutional legality." A First Information Report (FIR) was then lodged against two unidentified assailants and the investigation was transferred to the state police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which later filed a chargesheet.

In September 2012, the High Court handed over the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation. —*PTI*

AMID WORSENING TIES

China will never treat India as an equal: Official

SANTA CLARA, 6 MAY

China will never treat India as an equal partner and by amassing troops on the border, Beijing is forcing New Delhi to spend more money on defence than capital investment, Mukesh Aghi, the head of a top US-based India-centric business and strategic group has said.

The militaries of India and China have been locked in a standoff since May 2020 and a full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have had several rounds of talks at the diplomatic and military levels.

"What we are witnessing today is for the first time in a human race, a democratic nation of 1.4 billion people has shown exponential growth in the economic arena," Aghi, the president of the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF), said.

Growing at 7-8 per cent, India's economy is now touching USD 4 trillion. "It is still very small when you compare it to the global GDP, which is around USD 105 trillion. We are still around 3 to 3.5 per cent of the global GDP," he told Indian-American entrepreneurs. "More important is what we are seeing is the challenges India faces as it tries to grow its economy. One of the biggest challenges it faces is China. China in every aspect will never treat India as an equal partner," he said.

"China is a military power, an economic and a technology power. Basically, its objective is to dominate starting with the Asian Pacific. It sees India as a challenge," Aghi said. That's where India has to find a balance to continue its economic trajectory for the next 20-plus years without having a war with this neighbour with which it shares a border of 3,000 kilometres, he said.

"Chinese do realise that. So, what they're doing is a thousand-cut strategy. They moved a hundred thousand troops on the border. India has to move another 100,000 thousand troops. So, it's eating into the capital defence budget, spending less on capital investment, and more on operation. That's the Chinese strategy," he said. —*PTI*

10 schools in Ahmedabad received an email threatning blast on Monday PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

10 Ahmedabad schools get bomb threat mails

AHMEDABAD, 6 MAY

On the eve of Lok Sabha elections in Ahmedabad, as many as 10 schools here received an email on Monday threatening bomb blasts, though a police statement said this was a hoax as searches failed to unearth anything suspicious.

After being alerted, police as well as bomb detection and disposal squad, dog squad and Crime Branch teams reached these schools and conducted a thorough search, a statement by Ahmedabad City Crime Branch informed.

"No explosives were found during the search operation. Our teams are patrolling these areas and technical surveillance has also been initiated about the sender of the email. We appeal to people not to panic and to stay away from rumours.

This threat was a hoax," the statement said.

Ignore this email (sent to schools) and exercise your voting rights tomorrow without any fear, it asked citizens.

The schools that received the threat email included DPS and Anand Niketan in Bopal, Udgam School on SG Highway, Calorx School in Ghatlodia, Kendriya Vidyalaya at Chandkheda and Army Cantonment on Airport Road.

"The sender threatened to blow up our school. Our school has 24 hour security and NEET was conducted at our campus yesterday. We have not received any parcels from outside and our doors were also shut," said Udgam School administrator Dhimant Choksi.

"Some schools received emails threatening bomb blasts. This seems to be on the lines of bomb threats received by schools in Delhi some days back. As per our primary investigation, the email's domain is out of India. The email was sent from a location outside of India," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Cyber Crime Cell) Lavina Sinha told PTI.

During the search, nothing suspicious was found, she added.

The district education officer Rohit Chaudhary said after the emails were received schools informed local police, while his department updated the control room.

"A preliminary probe has revealed it was a hoax and the threat was given to disturb the peaceful atmosphere in view of voting on 7 May, he said.

Polling in 25 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat will be held on Tuesday. —*PTI*

BOMB KILLS TEEN IN BENGAL; BJP MP DEMANDS PROBE

KOLKATA, 31 MARCH

A teenage boy was killed and two others were injured in a bomb explosion in West Bengal's Hooghly district on Monday, prompting the local BJP MP Locket Chatterjee to block the arterial for over two hours demanding NIA probe into the incident.

The incident occurred at Pandua in Hooghly district near a pond where a group of boys were playing.Police said the boy succumbed to his injuries in a hospital in Pandua while two other injured persons were transferred to a healthcare facility in Chinsurah for better treatment.An investigation into the explosion that occurred at around 8.30am has started, police said. The BJP MP, accompanied by hundreds of party workers, blocked GT Road alleging that TMC goons were involved in the blast in their bid to create an air of panic ahead of Abhishek Banerjee's campaign in the area later in the day. —*PTI*

ILLEGAL MINING CASE

MP cop murder: Tractor owner held, homes of accused demolished

SHAHDOL, 6 MAY

Authorities have demolished the houses of two people accused in a case of crushing a policeman to death by a tractor-trolley transporting illegally mined sand in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district, an official said on Monday.

The police also arrested the absconding tractor-trolley owner, Surendra Singh, late Sunday night, Superintendent of Police Kumar Prateek told PTI.

Surendra Singh's son Ashutosh Singh, who was piloting the tractor, and vehicle driver Raj Rawat were arrested earlier in connection with the incident.

A proposal to give an assistance of Rs 1 crore to the family of the deceased assistant sub-inspector (ASI), Mahendra Bagri, will be sent to the Election Commission for approval (in view of the model code of conduct in force), the Chief Minister's Office said.

Police personnel inspects the area where a cop was allegedly run over by a sand mafia's tractor, in Shahdol PHOTO: PTI

ASI Bagri, posted at the Beohari police station, was going along with two colleagues to arrest a person in some case. On the way, they saw a sand-laden tractor-trolley coming towards their direction and tried to stop it, SP Prateek said on Sunday.

Bagri and the other policemen gave a signal to the driver to stop the tractor c arrying the illegally mined sand. But he did not stop and the vehicle ran over the ASI, the official said. District Collector Tarun Bhatnagar said the tractor driver's house valued at around Rs 4 lakh was demolished on Sunday evening.

Two houses, valued at Rs 10 lakh and Rs 4 lakh, of tractor owner Surendra Singh were also demolished, he added. —*PTI*

Genetic defects cause cerebral palsy in children: Study

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Genetic defects underlie about a fourth of Chinese children affected by cerebral palsy, and not a lack of oxygen at birth as previously thought, new research has found.

Cerebral palsy is a disorder affecting one's ability to move. It is the most common motor disability in children, with symptoms emerging in infancy and early childhood.

The disability is sometimes also associated with autism and intellectual deficiencies.

Birth asphyxia, or receiving insufficient oxygen at the time of being born, can cause physical harm, especially to the brain, and is considered one of the main causes of cerebral palsy.

Cerebral palsy is a disorder affecting one's ability to move. It is the most common motor disability in children PHOTO: PIXABAY

The world's largest study of cerebral palsy genetics, involving more than 1,500 affected Chinese children, found that mutations were significantly higher in a fourth of these children receiving insufficient oxygen at birth.

Researchers said this indicated that birth asphyxia could be secondary to the underlying genetic defects.

The results, published in the journal Nature Medicine, are consistent with smaller studies globally, they said.

According to human geneticist Josef Gecz from the University of Adelaide, who co-led the Australian team, 24.5 per cent of Chinese children in the study had rare genetic variations linked to cerebral palsy.—*PTI*

ICSE RESULTS OUT

Girls outshine boys in Class 10 & 12 exams

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) on Monday announced the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE Class 10) and Indian School Certificate (ISC Class 12) results for 2024, Secretary Joesph Emmanuel said.

Girls have outperformed boys in both ICSE (class 10) and ISC (class 12) with a pass percentage of 99.65 per cent and 98.92 per cent respectively.

This year, around 3.43 lakh students appeared for the CISCE examination for Classes 10 and 12.

In total, 1,30,506 boys and 1,13,111 girls took the Class 10 final exam this year. The exam was passed by 1,29,612 boys and 1,12,716 girls.

Students celebrate after announcement of ICSE Board's Class 10th results, in Gurugram, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

A total of 47,136 girls and 52,765 boys appeared in the Class 12 exam and 46,626 girls and 51,462 boys passed the exam.

The western region of the country had the best pass percentage at 99.91 percent for Class 10 followed by the Southern region having a pass percentage of 99.88%.

For class 10, the best-performing schools abroad are from Indonesia, Singapore and Dubai (U.A.E.) with a 100% pass percentage.

Meanwhile, for class 12, the best-performing schools abroad are from Singapore and Dubai (U.A.E.) with a 100% pass percentage.

The ICSE Examination was conducted in 60 written subjects, out of which 20 were Indian languages, 13 were foreign languages, and one classical language.

The examination started on 21 February, 2024 and concluded on 28 March, 2024 and was conducted over 18 days.

The ISC examination was conducted in 47 written subjects, out of which 12 were Indian languages, four were Foreign languages and two were Classical languages. The exam started on 12 February, 2024 and concluded on 4 April, 2024 and was conducted over 28 days. —*ANI*

Umar Ansari gets bail in code of conduct case

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to Umar Ansari, son of late gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, in a criminal case registered against him during the 2022 assembly elections for alleged violation of the model code of conduct.

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and PK Mishra asked Umar to appear before the trial court in connection with the case.

On 25 January, the top court had granted him protection from arrest in the case.

The Allahabad High Court on 19 December last year had rejected the anticipatory bail application of Ansari, and said that looking at the facts and circumstances of the case, the offence is made out.

the First Information Report (FIR) was lodged on 4 March, 2022 at Kotwali police station in Mau district against Abbas Ansari (SBSP candidate from Mau Sadar seat), Umar Ansari and 150 unknown people.

It was alleged in the FIR that on 3 March, 2022 at Pahadpura ground, Abbas Ansari, Umar Ansari, and organiser Mansoor Ahmad Ansari in a public meeting called for settling a score with the Mau administration. —*PTI*

- A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and PK Mishra asked Umar to appear before the trial court in connection with the case.On 25 January, the top court had granted him protection from arrest in the case

Radhika: Was offered alochol during Bharat Jodo

BHUBANESWAR, 6 MAY

Chhattisgarh Congress leader Radhika Khera, who resigned from the party on Sunday after alleging "disrespect" from the state unit, claimed that the Congress began to "hate her" after she visited the Ayodhya Ram Temple and was reprimanded for sharing videos or photos of the grand temple.Addressing a press conference in the national capital, Khera said that the party instructed her not to visit the temple during the election period.

She further alleged that during Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, the media chairman of Chhattisgarh Congress offered her alcohol. *—PTI*

Court dismisses plea against Vijayan's daughter

T'PURAM, 6 MAY

A vigilance court here on Monday dismissed the petition filed by Congress MLA Mathew Kuzhalnadan seeking a court-monitored probe into the alleged financial transactions between a private mining company and the now-defunct IT company of T Veena, the daughter of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Kuzhalnadan had initially approached the Special Vigilance Court here, saying the Vigilance Department refused to probe the financial transactions between Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd. (CMRL) and Veena's company Exalogic. Later, he changed his stance and sought a court-monitored probe into the alleged financial transactions. The court dismissed the plea after a detailed hearing on the documents submitted by the Congress legislator.

Meanwhile, Kuzhalnadan said the order was unexpected and will take further action after going through the judgement. *—PTI*

Baghel, Gehlot Cong observers for Rae Bareli, Amethi

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Congress on Monday appointed former chief ministers Bhupesh Baghel and Ashok Gehlot as AICC senior observers for Rae Bareli and Amethi Parliamentary constituencies, respectively. Ending weeks of suspense, the Congress on Friday announced that Rahul Gandhi will contest the Lok Sabha elections from Rae Bareli, the constituency held by his mother Sonia Gandhi for the last two decades, and Kishori Lal Sharma, a close aide of the Gandhi family, will fight from Amethi. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is set to spearhead the campaign in Rae Bareli and Amethi, and camp in these parliamentary constituencies in Uttar Pradesh from Monday to ensure the party's victory in the two high-profile seats. *—PTI*

BJP leader booked for killing farmer in Punjab

RAJPURA, 6 MAY

Police here have booked BJP leader Harwinder Singh Harpalpur for culpable homicide not amounting to murder in connection with the death of a farmer during a protest against a BJP candidate on 4 May. Sixty-year-old Surinder Pal Singh died after he fell on the ground during the protest against Patiala Lok Sabha seat candidate Preneet Kaur. According to a complaint lodged by Pal's nephew Resham Singh, Pal was among a group of farmers who were trying to confront Kaur to question her during their protest. But Harpalpur and some other unidentified people allegedly started pushing them and in the melee, his uncle fell down and his head smashed the floor, Resham Singh alleged. *—PTI*

PM links ₹25 cr J'khand cash haul to Gandhis

He says accused is Gandhi's 'servant'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

EAST GODAVARI, 6 MAY

After the Enforcement Directorate (ED) recovered a huge cash haul in Jharkhand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday attacked Congress and asked "Why such mountains of notes are recovered from those who are close to the first family of Congress?"

Addressing a public meeting here today, Modi said that Congress people had converted their servant's house into a warehouse of black money.

"When Congress was at the Centre, India was discussed for scams. These Congress and INDIA alliance people are angry and keep shouting 'ED, ED' every day. In Jharkhand, ED has dug out mountains of currency notes from the servant of the personal secretary of a Congress minister. Congress made their servant's house a godown of their black money. This is not the first time, earlier, from a Congress MP, an even bigger mountain of notes was recovered. Why such mountains of notes are recovered from those who are close to the first family of Congress?" he said.

"Modi is not worried about the abuses but the poor. I am taking legal advice on how to return the money to those who have been robbed," Modi added.

Further, attacking the YSRCP government in Andhra Pradesh, the Prime Minister said that the people of the state have fully rejected the YSR Congress.

"YSR Congress got 5 years in Andhra Pradesh, but they wasted this time. Once this state was at the top of development but then the YSR Congress derailed it. Instead of working for the people, this government drowned the state in huge debt. when it was Chandrababu Naidu's govt, this state was on top of development but YSR Congress' government brought development down," he said.

Meanwhile, Modi on Monday called himself "son of Lord Jagannath" and asserted that the expiry date of BJD government in Odisha is 4 June, the day the Assembly election results will be announced.

Addressing his first election rally in the state, Modi said, "Odisha mein BJD ast hain, Congress past hai aur log BJP per ashwasth hai. Sirf BJP ummido ka naya suraj ban kar ubhri hain (In Odisha, the BJD is setting sun, the Congress is battered and people are sure of BJP. And the BJP has emerged as the only ray of hope for the people)." Addressing another rally in Nabarangpur, the tribal heartland of Odisha, Modi claimed that his government has been working for the welfare of indigenous people. *—PTI*

'RaGa making false claims on varsities'

New Delhi, 6 May

As many as 181 academicians, including Vice Chancellors and former VCs, have accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of spreading "falsehood" regarding the appointment process for university heads and sought lawful action against him. In an open letter, they said Congress leader has alleged that Vice Chancellors are appointed solely on the basis of affiliation with some organisation rather than merit as they slammed his claims. The process by which VCs are selected is characterised by transparent procedure, they claimed.Jawaharlal University Vice Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Delhi University VC Yogesh Singh and AICTE Chairman T G Sitharam are among the signatories. *—PTI*

If the BJP leaders read the words 'generation of wealth' as 'redistribution of wealth', they should either go back to middle school or consult an eye doctor

-P Chidambaram, Congress leader

RaGa: Will give ₹400 MGNREGA allowance daily

He says Cong will waive farms loans

KHARGONE, 6 MAY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said loans of farmers will be waived and the daily allowance under the MGNREGA scheme will be raised from Rs 250 to Rs 400 soon after the party government is formed at the Centre post elections.

Addressing a campaign rally at Segaon under Khargone Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh, Gandhi alleged Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made up his mind to alter the Constitution and eventually scrap it.

"Soon after coming to power at the Centre, the Congress government will waive loans of farmers and raise the MGNREGA allowance from Rs 250 to Rs 400 per day," he said.

Congress has fielded Porlal Kharte and Narendra Patel from Khargone (ST) and Khandwa Lok Sabha constituencies, respectively.

"This election is being fought for saving the Constitution, reservations, and also the Jal, Jungle, and Jameen of tribal people, and public sector," Gandhi said.

Modi wants to give all these things to 22-25 billionaires including Adani, he alleged.

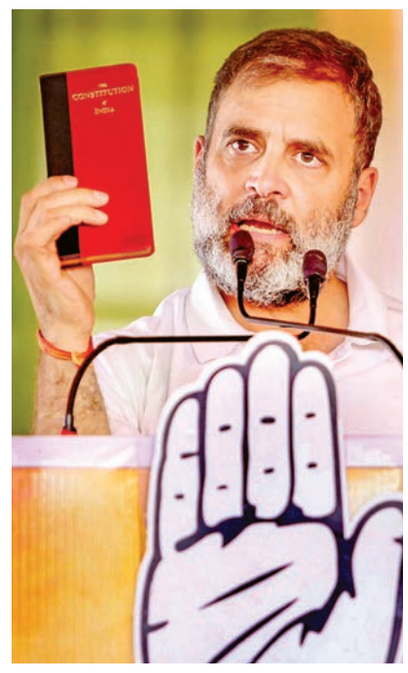
He said the INDIA alliance government will deposit Rs 1 lakh into the accounts of poor women to make them lakhpatis.

alleged Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made up his mind to alter and scrap the Constitution, a move he said will deprive tribals and other sections of their guaranteed rights and destroy public sector.

"These elections are being fought to save the Constitution and reservations extended to the poor and protect the rights on land, jungle and employment. But Modiji has made up his mind to change and scrap it (Constitution)," he said.

Khargone (reserved for Scheduled Tribe) will vote on 13 May.

After coming to power, the opposition alliance would enact a law to ensure that farmers get the minimum support price (MSP) for their produce, the Congress leader said.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses a public meeting in Ratlam on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Gandhi also said if the Constitution is scrapped, the rights of people will cease to exist.

"Your (rights on) land, water, jungle, and reservations will end, the public sector will be finished and the rule of 20 to 25 rich people will kick in. Arabpatis (billionaires) like (Gautam) Adani want your land, water, and jungle, which will be snatched and handed over to them (if BJP gets a third term)," he alleged.Airports, power stations, and infrastructure have already been given to 22 to 25 multi-billionaires by Modi, he alleged. *—PTI*

Soren moves SC against rejection of plea by J'khand HC

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren has filed an appeal in Supreme Court against Jharkhand High Court's order which dismissed his plea challenging his arrest by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in a money laundering case against him.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Soren, mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud for early listing of the case.

The bench also comprising JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra asked Sibal to send an email and it will look into it.Sibal told the bench that the election phase in Jharkhand will to begin from 13 May. "Hemant Soren was arrested on 31 January, we moved the High Court on 4 February and High Court did not deliver the judgement. The phase of election starts on 13 May.... This court issued notice and High Court delivered the judgement on 3 May," said Sibal. On 3 May, the court dismissed Soren's plea challenging arrest by the Enforcement Directorate, days after Supreme Court agreed to hear his plea against arrest in the week commencing from 6 May. *—ANI*

Cars parked outside Cong office in Amethi vandalised

AMETHI, 6 MAY

Days after Congress leader Kishori Lal Sharma filed his nomination from Amethi Lok Sabha constituency, vehicles parked outside Congress office in Gauriganj, Amethi were vandalised by unidentified people on Sunday night.

Police reached the spot and spoke with the party workers who took to the streets in protest against the incident.

Taking to X Congress shared, "Smriti Irani and BJP workers are badly scared in Amethi. Foreseeing the defeat, BJP goons armed with sticks and rods reached outside the Congress office in Amethi and vandalised vehicles parked there. There has been a deadly attack on Congress workers and the people of Amethi. Many people are badly injured in this attack. During the incident, vehicles of local people were also damaged."

People stand near a vehicle that was allegedly vandalised outside the Congress office in Amethi on Sunday night **PHOTO: PTI**

Congress candidate from Amethi, Kishori Lal Sharma sternly remarked that they are not going to be intimidated by the act and this was against the culture of Amethi.

He said that although ideologies of BJP and Congress are different people should ask for votes based on their performance. "Police need to find out the culprits," he added. *—ANI*

Excise case: Delhi court denies bail to Kavitha

K Kavitha **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

A court here on Monday dismissed the bail applications filed by Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in corruption and money laundering cases being probed by CBI and ED in connection with the alleged excise policy scam.

Special Judge for CBI and ED, Kaveri Baweja, dismissed the applications, saying the stage was not right to grant the relief.

ED arrested Kavitha, 46, from her Banjara Hills residence in Hyderabad on 15 March, and she was in judicial custody in the case.

CBI arrested her from judicial custody.Meanwhile the Rouse Avenue Court on Monday allowed leader K Kavitha's application, seeking direction to the Central Agencies to produce her physically on 7 May, before the concerned Court.

The Special Judge Kaveri Baweja on Monday allowed Kavitha's plea. *—PTI/ANI*

SC TO CONSIDER INTERIM BAIL TO KEJRIWAL

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Supreme Court will consider on Tuesday whether to enlarge Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections when it hears his petition challenging his arrest in an excise policy-linked money laundering case.

Whether Kejriwal, who has been in custody through the Lok Sabha elections so far, is be able to campaign during the remaining phases will depend on the outcome of the proceedings.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta will take up as the first matter the plea of the AAP leader.

Kejriwal was arrested on 21 March and is currently lodged in Tihar jail under judicial custody. On 3 May, the top court had said it may consider granting him interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. It had told the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that arguments on Kejriwal's plea against his arrest are likely to take time and therefore it was considering hearing the probe agency on the issue of interim bail on account of the Lok Sabha elections in Delhi. Polling will be held in Delhi on 25 May. *—PTI*

TALES FROM ASSAM

Women candidates see a drop, female voters outnumber men

GUWAHATI, 6 MAY

Despite Assam having more women voters, only 12 female candidates are contesting the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, down from the previous count of 14. These 12 women candidates are competing in seven out of the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

Assam has a total electorate of 2,45,72,144 with 1,23,39,241 women voters and 1,23,25,293 male voters.

This declining trend in women candidates has been continuing since the 2014

PHOTO: PTI

polls when there were 16 female aspirants.

The ruling BJP has fielded one woman candidate, Bijuli Kalita Medhi, for the prestigious Guwahati seat, while the opposition Congress has nominated Mira Borthakur Goswami in Guwahati and Roselina Tirkey in Kaziranga.

Among smaller parties, Gana Suraksha Party has given tickets to two women while Hindu Samaj Party, Gana Sangram Parishad, SUCI(C) and Voters Party have given to one each and there are three independents.

Kaziranga leads with three women candidates, followed by two each in Guwahati and Kokrajhar (ST), and one each in Sonitpur, Darrang-Udalguri, Nagaon, Barpeta, and Dhubri. *—PTI*

Grievances of non-Bodo voters over land, ST status in focus

KOKRAJHAR, 6 MAY

The brewing discontent over the absence of land rights and Scheduled Tribe (ST) status among non-Bodo voters could significantly sway the outcome in the Kokrajhar Lok Sabha constituency, situated within Assam's Bodoland Territorial Region.

Despite being represented by Naba Kumar Sarania of the Gana Suraksha Party, the first non-Bodo MP from Kokrajhar, for two consecutive terms, these unmet demands of non-Bodo voters

PHOTO: PTI

may affect his party's poll fortune in the elections.

Sarania's nomination was rejected this time due to the cancellation of his ST status by the state government, a decision upheld by the Gauhati High Court.

His Gana Suraksha Party fielded Binita Deka as an alternative arrangement.

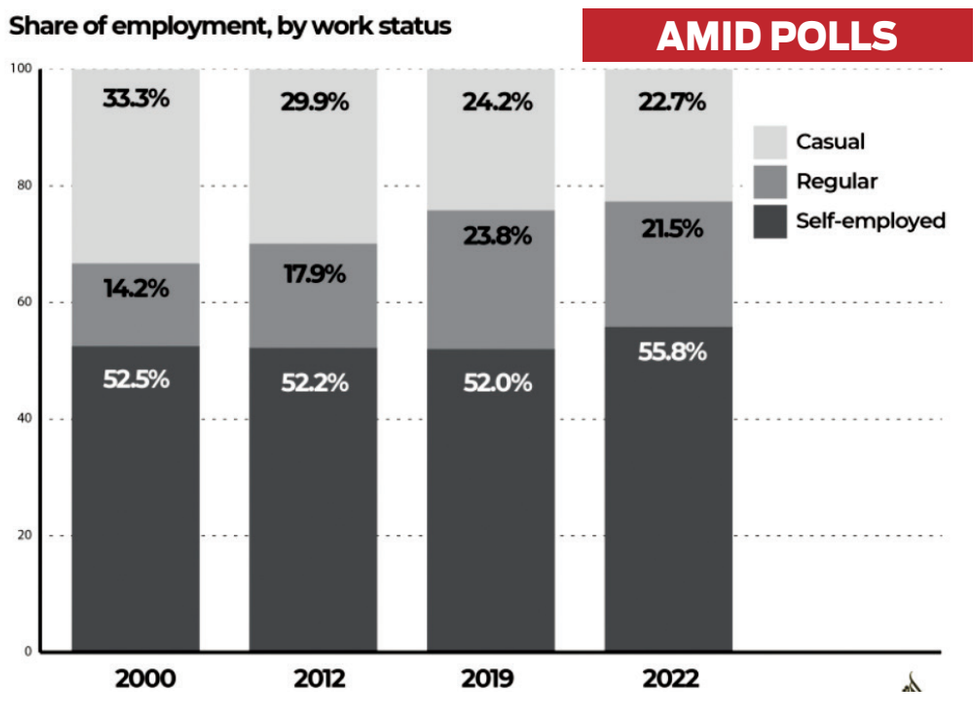
TMC is vying to capitalise on absence of a 'strong' GSP candidate by projecting itself as the 'alternative', though the ruling force in BTR, United People's Party Liberal, and chief opposition Bodoland People's Front asserted that they enjoy the support of all sections of voters. "Two-time MP Naba Sarania had played the 'non-Bodo card' to win elections. said Amrit Narayan Patgiri, a retired vice-principal. *—PTI*

POLL PREPARATIONS

Vehicles on election duty halt at a distribution centre on the eve of the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections, in Guwahati, Assam
PHOTO: PTI

Indians cry over destroyed dreams & joblessness

AMID POLLS



Self-employment has increased since pandemic and regular employment has reduced ***PHOTO:AL JAZEERA***

Ever since he can remember, Rohit Kumar Sahu knew he wanted to go to college and get a well-paying job. His father delivered courier packages across Ranchi on a bicycle, and Sahu had no idea how to realise his dream.

He signed up for a job with Zomato, thinking this could be his path to earning money to pay for college fees.

Sahu began with just a few hours of work so he could attend college alongside his job, but he could't make enough deliveries on his bicycle — and that meant he couldn't earn much.

He took a loan from friends and a finance company and bought a scooter. Even as the loan repayments kicked in, Zomato reduced its payment to delivery workers like Sahu, and he got fewer deliveries as more drivers joined the app.

Sahu scaled up his work to as much as 14 hours a day, going to college only to take exams, but he still had to borrow money from his parents for loan repayments.

Frustrated, Sahu and other drivers in Ranchi staged a strike asking to be paid better. But, Sahu says, company officials told them they could hire others from India's growing army of bike riders instead and could block the strikers from the app. This broke the strike – and left Sahu with loans and his dream of college and a steady job seeming more distant than before.

Sahu is among a growing number of Indians bearing the brunt of the increasing informalisation of work. A study released in March by International Labour Organization (ILO) says that India's workforce is getting more informalised and that the quality of employment has suffered especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sahu's experience is characteristic not only of India's growing gig economy, but also seems symptomatic of the broader employment landscape. About 70 per cent of India's construction workers and 62 per cent of its casual agricultural workers earn salaries below minimum wage, found the study, which uses government data.

Even in the formal sector, about 18 per cent of workers did not have work contracts that could protect them. They also had fewer benefits than before, the study found.

'Slippage' in job quality

While India's economy is pegged to grow at 6.5 per cent in FT23, according to the United Nations Trade and Development, its ability to create quality jobs to meet the aspirations of its increasingly educated youth has emerged as one of the key issues of the national election currently under way.

Jayati Ghosh, a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, wrote, "Millions of educated youth joining the workforce every year, unmet expectations and growing social unrest threaten to turn the country's much-anticipated 'demographic dividend' into a disaster".

Ravi Srivastava, one of the lead authors of the India Employment Report and director of the New Delhi-based Institute for Human Development's Centre for Employment Studies, said

Nearly 90 per cent of the workforce is informally employed, the report says. Self-employment as a form of work grew 3.8 percentage points between 2019 and 2022, while regular employment declined to 21.5 percent from 23.8 percent. The share of casual employment declined to 22.7 per cent in 2022 from 24.2 per cent in 2019.

Precariousness of the gig economy

Work for both men and women may have remained precarious even after the pandemic as men often returned to big cities for jobs in construction or in the gig economy, both areas with little security.

In May 2022, Mumbai beautician Gurpreet Sharma's two fingers got stuck together while fixing nail extensions for a client. Unsticking them with oil had led to swelling and burns on her fingers, limiting her ability to work or do household chores for months. Urban Company, a platform offering at-home services through which she got the job, did not provide her medical insurance since it covered only hospitalisation.

Pratik Mishra, of the All India Gig Workers Union, which had helped Sahu in organising efforts, said he had worked with unions in Ranchi's large coal and steel sector for years, but what he encountered with delivery workers was like nothing he had seen before.

He is downbeat about his job prospects. More than 4,00,000 applicants take the exams for less than 12,000 government jobs. "Kya chance hai?" he asks rhetorically. "What are my chances?" *—Al Jazeera*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

How much time should you spend sitting vs standing?

People have a pretty intuitive sense of what is healthy – standing is better than sitting, exercise is great for overall health and getting good sleep is imperative.

However, if exercise in the evening may disrupt our sleep, or make us feel the need to be more sedentary to recover, a key question emerges – what is the best way to balance our 24 hours to optimise our health?

Our research attempted to answer this for risk factors for heart disease, stroke and diabetes. We found the optimal amount of sleep was 8.3 hours, while for light activity and moderate to vigorous activity, it was best to get 2.2 hours each.

Finding the right balance

Current health guidelines recommend you stick to a sensible regime of moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity 2.5–5 hours per week.

However mounting evidence now suggests how you spend your day can have meaningful ramifications for your health. In addition to moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity, this means the time you spend sitting, standing, doing light physical activity (such as walking around your house or office) and sleeping.

Our research looked at more than 2,000 adults who wore body sensors that could interpret their physical behaviours, for seven days. This gave us a sense of how they spent their average 24 hours.

At the start of the study participants had their waist circumference, blood sugar and insulin sensitivity measured. The body sensor and assessment data was matched and analysed then tested against health risk markers — such as a heart disease and stroke risk score — to create a model.

Using this model, we fed through thousands of permutations of 24 hours and found the ones with the estimated lowest associations with heart disease risk and blood-glucose levels. This created many optimal mixes of sitting, standing, light and moderate intensity activity.

When we looked at waist circumference, blood sugar, insulin sensitivity and a heart disease and stroke risk score, we noted differing optimal time zones. Where those zones mutually overlapped was ascribed the optimal zone for heart disease and diabetes risk.

You're doing more physical activity than you think

We found light-intensity physical activity (defined as walking less than 100 steps per minute) – such as walking to the water cooler, the bathroom, or strolling casually with friends – had strong associations with glucose control, and especially in people with type 2 diabetes.

Our experimental evidence shows that interrupting our sitting regularly with light-physical activity (such as taking a 3–5 minute walk every hour) can improve our metabolism, especially so after lunch.

While the moderate-to-vigorous physical activity time might seem a quite high, at more than 2 hours a day, we defined it as more than 100 steps per minute. It should be noted that these findings are preliminary. This is the first study of heart disease and diabetes risk and the "optimal" 24 hours, and the results will need further confirmation with longer prospective studies.

The data is also cross-sectional. This means that the estimates of time use are correlated with the disease risk factors, meaning it's unclear whether how participants spent their time influences their risk factors or whether those risk factors influence how someone spends their time.

Australia's adult physical activity guidelines need updating

Australia's physical activity guidelines currently only recommend exercise intensity and time. A new set of guidelines are being developed to incorporate 24-hour movement. Soon Australians will be able to use these guidelines to examine their 24 hours and understand where they can make improvements.

While our new research can inform the upcoming guidelines, we should keep in mind that the recommendations are like a north star: something to head towards to improve your health. In principle this means reducing sitting time where possible, increasing standing and light-intensity physical activity, increasing more vigorous intensity physical activity, and aiming for a healthy sleep of 7.5–9 hours per night.

Beneficial changes could come in the form of reducing screen time in the evening or opting for an active commute over driving commute, or prioritising an earlier bed time over watching television in the evening.

It's also important to acknowledge these are recommendations for an able adult. We all have different considerations, and above all, movement should be fun. *—The Conversation*

Research looked at 2,000 adults who wore body sensors that could interpret their physical behaviours for seven days. That helped in understanding how they spent their average day ***PHOTO:UNSPLASH***

North Korean weapons are killing Ukrainians; the implications are bigger

On 2 January, a young Ukrainian weapons inspector, Khrystyna Kimachuk, got word that an unusual-looking missile had crashed into a building in the city of Kharkiv. She began calling her contacts in the Ukrainian military, desperate to get her hands on it. Within a week, she had the mangled debris splayed out in front of her at a secure location in the capital Kyiv.

She began taking it apart and photographing every piece, including the screws and computer chips smaller than her fingernails. She could tell almost immediately this was not a Russian missile, but her challenge was to prove it.

Buried amidst the mess of metal and spouting wires, Ms Kimachuk spotted a tiny character from the Korean alphabet. Then she came across a more telling detail. The number 112 had been stamped onto parts of the shell. This corresponds to the year 2023 in the North Korean calendar. She realised she was looking at the first piece of hard evidence that weapons were being used to attack her country.

Since then, the Ukrainian military says dozens of North Korean missiles have been fired by Russia into its territory. They have killed at least 24 people and injured 70.

For all the recent talk of Kim Jong Un preparing to start a nuclear war, the more immediate threat is now North Korea's ability to fuel existing wars and feed global instability.

It was bursting with the latest foreign technology. Most of the electronic parts had been manufactured in the US and Europe over the past few years. There was even a US computer chip made as recently as March 2023. This meant that North Korea had illicitly procured vital weapons components, snuck them into the country, assembled the missile, and shipped it to Russia in secret, where it had then been transported to the frontline and fired.

Using satellite imagery, they have been able to observe four Russian cargo ships shuttling back and forth between North Korea and a Russian military port, loaded with hundreds of containers at a time.

In total RUSI estimates 7,000 containers have been sent, filled with more than a million ammunition shells and grad rockets - the sort that can be fired out of trucks in large volleys. Their assessments are backed up by intelligence from the US, UK and South Korea, though Russia and North Korea have denied the trade.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin ***PHOTO: BBC***

Buying and firing

But it is the arrival of ballistic missiles on the battlefield that has concerned Mr Byrne and his colleagues the most, because of what they reveal about North Korea's weapons programme.

Since the 1980s North Korea has sold its weapons abroad, largely to countries in the North Africa and the Middle East, including Libya, Syria and Iran. They have tended to be old, Soviet-style missiles with a poor reputation. There is evidence that Hamas fighters likely used some of Pyongyang's old rocket-propelled grenades in their attack last 7 October.

But the missile fired on 2 January, that Ms Kimachuk took apart, was seemingly Pyongyang's most sophisticated short-range missile - the Hwasong 11 - capable of travell-

Many of the computer chips that are integral to modern weapons, that guide them through the air to their intended targets, are the same chips that are used to power our phones, washing machines and cars, Spleeters explained.

These are being sold all over the world in staggering numbers. Manufacturers sell to distributors in their billions, who sell them on in their millions, meaning they often have no idea where their products end up.

Even so, Mr Byrne was frustrated to learn how many components in the missile had come from the West. It proved that North Korea's procurement networks were more robust and effective than even he, who investigates these networks, had realised.

By buying Pyongyang's weapons, Moscow is now violating the very sanctions it once voted for as a member of the UN Security Council. Then earlier this year it effectively disbanded a UN panel that monitored sanctions breaches, likely to avoid scrutiny.

Pyongyang: A major missile supplier?

More troubling still is that the war is providing North Korea with a shop window to the rest of the world.

Now that Pyongyang is mass producing these weapons, it will want to sell them to more countries, and if the missiles are good enough for Russia, they will be good enough for others, said Dr Lewis - especially as the Russians are setting the example that it is okay to violate sanctions.

He predicts going forward that North Korea will become a big supplier of missiles to countries in the China-Russia-Iran bloc. In the wake of Iran's assault on Israel this month, the US said it was "incredibly concerned" that North Korea could be working with Iran on its nuclear and ballistic weapons programmes.

Now not only are its missiles a source of prestige and political power, but they are also generating it vast amounts of money, Dr Lewis explained. So why would Kim Jong Un ever give them up now?

—BBC News

PHOTO: X/@MOIZESUFALLY

Ferry service to resume between Lanka and TN

COLOMBO, 6 MAY

The passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam in India and Kankesanthurai (KKS) suburb of Jaffna district in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka is set to resume on 13 May, the Indian High Commission said on Monday. The service, which had been launched in October last year after nearly 40 years, was halted a few days later owing to rough weather. "Strengthening maritime connectivity between India and Sri Lanka was a vital component of the vision document for economic partnership jointly adopted during the visit of the president of Sri Lanka to India in July 2023. The resumption of the ferry service is an affirmation of the people-centric policies of the Government of India," the high commission said. *—PTI*

Chad Prez polls begins; current PM likely to win

N'DJAMENA, 6 MAY

In the lead-up to Chad's presidential election, candidates delivered their final campaign messages on Saturday, marking the nation's first vote since the passing of longtime leader Idriss Deby, Africanews reported. Among the prominent contenders is Succes Masra, the current prime minister of the interim government. Addressing supporters in the capital, N'Djamena, Masra, a former executive of the African Development Bank, pledged a brighter future for the country's youth, emphasising job creation as a central focus. His platform includes a bold five-year plan aimed at generating 200,000 jobs, evenly distributed between the private and public sectors, forming what he calls a "minimum package of dignity." *—ANI*

Missing US and Aus tourists found dead in Mexico

ENSENADA, 6 MAY

The discovery of three bodies, bearing gunshot wounds to the head and dumped in a well, has been confirmed as those of missing tourists, including a US citizen, Mexican authorities revealed Sunday, CNN reported. Relatives of American Jack Carter Rhoad and Australian brothers Jake and Callum Robinson were able to positively identify the bodies without resorting to genetic tests, as stated by the Baja California Attorney General's office in a Sunday statement. Following the grim discovery, three Mexican citizens, previously questioned in connection with the tourists' disappearance, have been apprehended on suspicion of kidnapping, as announced by the attorney general's office. Among the suspects, one was identified as Jesus Gerardo "N," also known as "El Kekas," according to CNN. *—ANI*

Taiwan detects 2 Chinese aircraft around nation

TAIPEI, 6 MAY

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence Monday said it detected three military aircraft and six naval vessels operating around the island nation's airspace and waters, adding, that two aircraft entered its southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). According to the ministry's report, three PLA aircraft and six vessels belonging to China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) were detected as of 6 am local time. Of particular concern was the entry of two aircraft into Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ. An Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) is a region of airspace in which a country tries to identify, locate, and control aircraft in the interest of national security. *—ANI*

Israeli army asks Gazans to evacuate parts of Rafah

Israel described Rafah as the last significant Hamas stronghold

JERUSALEM, 6 MAY

The Israeli army on Monday ordered tens of thousands of people in the southern Gaza city of Rafah to begin evacuating, signalling that a long-promised ground invasion could be imminent.

The announcement complicated last-ditch efforts by international mediators, including the director of the CIA, to broker a cease-fire. Hamas and Qatar, a key mediator, have warned that an invasion of Rafah could derail the talks.

Israel has described Rafah as the last significant Hamas stronghold after seven months of war, and its leaders have repeatedly said they need to carry out a ground invasion to defeat the Islamic militant group.

Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an army spokesman, said some 100,000 people were being ordered to move to a nearby Israel-declared humanitarian zone called Muwasi. He said Israel was preparing a "limited scope operation" and would not say whether this was the beginning of a broader invasion of the city. But last October, Israel did not formally announce the launch of a ground invasion that continues to this day.

Some 1,00,000 people were being ordered to move — PHOTO: EPA

The move comes a day after Hamas militants carried out a deadly rocket attack from the area that killed three Israeli soldiers. Shoshani said Israel published a map of the evacuation area, and that orders were being issued through leaflets dropped from the sky, text messages and radio broadcasts.

He said Israel has expanded humanitarian aid into Muwasi, including field hospitals, tents, food and water. Israel's army said Monday on the social platform X it would act with "extreme force" against militants and urged the population to evacuate immediately for their safety.

Israel's plan to invade Rafah has raised global alarm because of the potential for harm to more than a million Palestinian civilians sheltering there. About 1.4 million Palestinians — more than half of Gaza's population — are jammed into the town and its surroundings. Most of them fled their homes elsewhere in the territory to escape Israel's onslaught and now face another wrenching move, or the danger of facing the brunt of a new assault. They live in densely packed tent camps, overflowing UN shelters or crowded apartments, and are dependent on international aid for food, with sanitation systems and medical facilities infrastructure crippled.

- The announcement complicated last-ditch efforts by international mediators, including the director of the CIA, to broker a cease-fire. Hamas and Qatar, a key mediator, have warned that an invasion of Rafah could derail talks

The UN agency that has helped millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank for decade, known as UNRWA warned on Monday of devastating consequences of a Rafah offensive, including more civilian suffering and deaths. *—AP*

Al Jazeera office raided as Israel takes channel off air

TEL AVIV, 6 MAY

Israel's government has moved to shut down the operations of the Al Jazeera television network in the country, branding it a mouthpiece for Hamas. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the cabinet agreed to the closure while the war in Gaza is ongoing. Police raided the Qatari broadcaster's office at the Ambassador hotel in Jerusalem on Sunday. Al Jazeera called claims it was a threat to Israeli security a "dangerous and ridiculous lie". The channel said it reserved the right to "pursue every legal step". Israel's Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi said equipment had been taken in the raid. A video posted by the minister on X shows police officers and inspectors from the ministry entering a hotel room. *—BBC*

Al Jazeera head office — PHOTO: X/@NEVERLETINATORY

Russia announces massive nuclear weapon drills

MOSCOW, 6 MAY

Russia has said it will hold drills that will include practice for the use of tactical nuclear weapons, days after top European leaders voiced stronger military support for Ukraine.

The Kremlin said on Monday the military exercises ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin were in response to statements by Western and NATO-member countries about sending troops into Ukraine, which Russia invaded more than two years ago.

They will include practice for the preparation and deployment of nonstrategic nuclear weapons intended to "increase the readiness … to fulfill combat tasks" after "provocative statements and threats of certain Western officials", the Ministry of Defence said.

Missile formations in the Southern Military District and naval forces will take part in the drills, which would take place "in the near future", it added. Russia's strategic nuclear forces regularly hold exercises but the statement marked the first public announcement of drills involving tactical nuclear weapons, which are usually smaller in yield – the amount of power released during an explosion – than the strategic nuclear weapons designed to destroy entire cities.

Missile formations in the Southern Military District and naval forces will take part in the drills — PHOTO: X/@CINNAIJA

The move marks an escalation of tensions that have risen since French President Emmanuel Macron said last week that his country would consider sending ground troops to Ukraine if Kyiv requests backup. A day later, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron said Ukraine could use British weapons against targets inside Russia if it wanted.

Russian officials condemned both statements and warned Moscow would retaliate to what they called a "dangerous escalation trend". Moscow has long warned that conflict with NATO would become inevitable if European members of the military alliance sent in their soldiers to fight in Ukraine. *—Al Jazeera*

'Over 23M Afghans in dire need of humanitarian aid'

KABUL, 6 MAY

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that a staggering 23.7 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in 2024, Khaama Press reported.

Despite a decline in violence, Afghanistan continues to grapple with significant humanitarian challenges, as emphasised by UNAMA on Sunday. Of the 23.7 million individuals requiring aid, 5.9 million are women and 5.4 million are men, according to the agency's statement. Echoing similar concerns, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has also highlighted the severe deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban assumed control of the country in August 2021, the political transition, contraction of the economy and reduced levels of donor funding have increased risks and needs at the local level, witnessing an exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis, marked by forced deportations and international aid. *—ANI*

Jinping begins first Europe tour in 5 years from France

PARIS, 6 MAY

Chinese President Xi Jinping is on his first trip to Europe in five years, which is likely to be dominated by Russia's war in Ukraine as well as economic strains between Beijing and Brussels.

The first stop will be France on 6 May with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

He will then travel to Serbia and Hungary, which have close ties with Russia. According to Matt Geracim, the assistant director of the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub, the Chinese president has three goals: "Repairing relations in Europe damaged by China's support for Russia's war, blunting EU's economic security agenda vis-a-vis China, and showcasing Beijing's strong ties with its stalwart partners Serbia and Hungary."

Here is all about Xi's European tour till Friday.

Beijing and Paris are marking 60 years of diplomatic relations. Macron will urge Xi to put pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin over Ukraine. The French president recently said, "If Russia wins, there will be no security in Europe."

Europe has also initiated investigation into China's subsidies for electric vehicle manufacturers.

Xi will then head to Serbia on the 25th anniversary of Chinese Embassy bombing for talks with Putin loyalist President Aleksandar Vucic. Three died when Washington said it accidentally struck the compound during NATO air campaign against Serb forces occupying Kosovo, triggering protests in China.

China is now the biggest investor in Serbia, which is not an EU member.

Xi will travel on 8 May to Budapest. He will meet Hungarian President Viktor Orban. Hungary is aligned with Beijing and Moscow and has allowed Chinese police officers in areas with large populations of ethnic Chinese. Hungary is also part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

—Al Jazeera

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan arrive in France — PHOTO: X/@OBSERVERDIPLO

UK facing 'disaster' of hung Parliament: Sunak

LONDON, 6 MAY

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak warned on Monday that an analysis of the local election results shows the country is headed for a hung Parliament led by the Opposition Labour Party, which "would be a disaster for Britain".

The 43-year-old British Indian leader told 'The Times' in the wake of a debacle for the governing Conservative Party, who lost hundreds of local council seats and key mayoralties across England in results over the weekend, that he was bitterly disappointed but determined to fight back.

He sought to paint a less bleak picture for party rebels, demanding a change of political course to win back voters in time for a general election, expected later this year. "These results suggest we are heading for a hung parliament with Labour as the largest party," Sunak told the newspaper. "[Labour Leader] Keir Starmer propped up in Downing Street by the SNP [Scottish National Party], Liberal Democrats and the Greens would be a disaster for Britain. The country doesn't need more political horse-trading, but action. We are the only party with a plan to deliver on the priorities of the people," he insisted.

Rishi Sunak — PHOTO: PTI

- He sought to paint a less bleak picture for party rebels, demanding a change of political course to win back voters in time for a general election, expected later this year

He went on to acknowledge the frustration of the voters because of a tough few years due to a cost-of-living crisis and soaring household bills, which had made them less inclined to vote for Tory councillors and mayors in the polls last Thursday. "Losing good Conservative councillors and a mayor as fantastic as Andy Street who has done so much good for the West Midlands is of course bitterly disappointing. But I am determined to show people that we are delivering for them, and standing up for values," he said. *—PTI*

ANTI-WAR PROTESTERS LEAVE USC AFTER POLICE ARRIVE

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

Students protesting the war in Gaza abandoned their camp at the University of Southern California early Sunday after being surrounded by police and threatened with arrest, while Northeastern University's commencement ended peacefully at Boston's Fenway Park. Developments in both places were being watched closely following scores of arrests last month — 94 people at USC in Los Angeles and about 100 at Northeastern in Boston. Dozens of Los Angeles Police Department officers arrived about 4 am at USC to assist campus safety officers. The university had warned of arrests on social media and in person. Video showed some protesters packing up and leaving. *—AP*

Sunita Williams set to fly into space for the 3rd time

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams is ready to fly into space for the third time on Tuesday as the pilot aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft in its the first crewed test flight.

Boeing's Starliner will blast off for the International Space Station from Cape Canaveral in Florida. Starliner will carry Williams, 58, and Butch Wilmore to the International Space Station, marking what could be a momentous and long-awaited victory for the beleaguered Boeing programme. She served as a flight engineer on Expedition 32 and then commander of Expedition 33. Expedition 14/15, Williams was launched with the crew of STS-116 on 9 December, 2006, docking with the International Space Station on 11 December, 2006. Williams spent four months conducting research and exploration aboard the orbiting laboratory. She landed in Kazakhstan on 18 November, 2012, after spending 127 days in space. Williams and Hoshide performed three spacewalks to replace a component that relays power from the space station's solar arrays to its systems and repair an ammonia leak on a station radiator. *—PTI*

Sunita Williams — PHOTO: PTI

CITY UNDER THREAT

Indian student stabbed to death in Aus

CHANDIGARH, 6 MAY

A 22-year-old MTech student was allegedly stabbed to death in Australia during a fight between some Indian students, the victim's uncle said on Monday.

He said that one more student was injured in the incident, which took place on Saturday around 9 pm local time in Melbourne. According to Yashvir, the victim's uncle, Navjeet Sandhu was fatally attacked with a knife by another student when he tried to intervene in a dispute between a few Indian students over some rent issue.

"Navjeet's friend (another Indian student) had asked him to accompany him to his house to pick up his belongings as he had a car. While his friend went inside, Navjeet heard some shouts and saw there was a scuffle. When Navjeet tried to intervene asking them not to fight, he was fatally stabbed in the chest with a knife," Yashvir, who'll retire from the Army in July, said.

Images of the accused — PHOTO: X/@VICTORIAPOLICE

He added that like Navjeet, the alleged accused also hails from Karnal. Yashvir said the family got the information about the incident early Sunday morning. Navjeet's friend, whom he was accompanying, also sustained injuries in the incident, the uncle of the deceased said.

According to Yashvir, Navjeet had moved to Australia on a study visa one-and-a-half years ago and his father, who is a farmer, had sold one-and-half acres of their land to fund his education. "We urge the Government of India to help us to bring the body as soon as possible," he said.

Meanwhile, Victoria Police said their Homicide Squad detectives are releasing details and images of two men they are searching for following a stabbing in Ormond in Melbourne's south-east. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 83.50 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day 5 paise lower at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices. Forex traders said a weak trend in domestic equities also dented investor sentiments. At the inter-bank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.43, then touched an intra-day high of 83.42 and a low of 83.50 against the greenback. The rupee finally settled at 83.50 (provisional) against dollar, registering a fall of 5 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee inched up 1 paisa to settle at 83.45 against the US dollar. Forex traders said US dollar demand from importers and a recovery in crude oil prices weighed on the rupee. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent higher at 105.09. In previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined USD 2.28 billion to USD 640.33 billion. *—PTI*

Gold climbs Rs 230; silver jumps Rs 700

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Gold prices climbed Rs 230 to Rs 72,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid jump in precious metal rates in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had settled at Rs 72,020 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices also jumped Rs 700 to Rs 84,300 per kg. It had closed at Rs 83,600 per kg in the previous close. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,312 per ounce, up USD 11 from the previous close. Silver was also quoting higher at USD 27.05 per ounce. In the previous session, it had ended at USD 26.55 per ounce. Meanwhile, in the futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold bounced Rs 562. *—PTI*

RITES to conduct safety checks of Vande Bharat train

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

RITES Limited, a prime transport infrastructure consultancy in India, together with ItalCertifier SPA, an Italian State Railways Group company, has won a contract to undertake independent safety assessment (ISA) of the Vande Bharat. The consortium will conduct design reviews, final safety acceptance assessments, and review test results. Meanwhile, as an excellent example of the 'Make in India' success story, Indian Railways launched first indigenous Semi High-Speed train, Vande Bharat Express. First Vande Bharat Express train was flagged off on February, 2019, on New Delhi-Kanpur-Varanasi route. *—ANI*

Kotak Mahindra Bank shares climb nearly 5 per cent

NEW DELHI,6 MAY

Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank on Monday rallied nearly 5 per cent after the company reported a 25 per cent growth in its March quarter net profit. The stock climbed 4.85 per cent to Rs 1,622.35 on the BSE. On the NSE, it jumped 4.90 per cent to Rs 1,622.50. It emerged as the biggest gainer among the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty firms. Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday reported a 25 per cent growth in its March quarter net profit at Rs 5,302 crore. On a standalone basis, the lender's Q4 net profit grew 18 per cent to Rs 4,133 crore. The FY24 consolidated net profit grew 22 per cent to Rs 18,213 crore. For the reporting quarter, its core net interest income increased 13 per cent to Rs 6,909 crore on the back of a 20 per cent loan growth. *—PTI*

Sensex closes flat, Nifty slips on profit by investors

NSE Nifty declined 33.15 points; SBI, Titan were among laggards

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

Benchmark Sensex closed almost flat in a range-bound trade on Monday as investors booked profits in index heavyweights amid high valuation concerns.

The 30-share BSE Sensex edged up 17.39 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 73,895.54. The barometer hit a high of 74,359.69 and a low of 73,786.29.

The broader NSE Nifty declined 33.15 points or 0.15 per cent to close at 22,442.70.

From the Sensex basket, Kotak Mahindra Bank jumped 5 per cent after the company reported a 25 per cent growth in its March quarter net profit at Rs 5,302 crore, limited by a drop in the core income due to narrow interest margins.

Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra and IndusInd Bank were among the other major gainers.

Sensex edged up at 17.39 points to settle at 73,895.54 *PHOTO: ANI*

- Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra and IndusInd Bank were among the other major gainers

Titan tanked 7 per cent after its March quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

State Bank of India, NTPC, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro were the other laggards.

The domestic indices traded in a range-bound manner, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"The broader indices also witnessed major selling pressure due to valuation concerns and profit-booking," he added.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.80 per cent to USD 83.62 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,391.98 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory. Japan and South Korea's markets were closed for the holidays.

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett said that the Indian market has "unexplored" opportunities which his conglomerate holding company, Berkshire Hathaway, would like to explore "in the future".

BSE benchmark dropped 732.96 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at 73,878.15 on Friday. The NSE Nifty also declined 172.35 points or 0.76 per cent to 22,475.85. *—PTI*

BY 2028

Airlines to have 50 pc share in int'l passenger traffic

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

As much as half of the country's international air passenger traffic is expected to be catered by Indian airlines by financial year 2027-28, credit ratings agency CRISIL said .

The share of Indian airlines in international passenger traffic, including originating or terminating as well as the traffic transitioning through the country, is seen surging 700 basis points to around 50 per cent by 2027-28, from 43 per cent in the previous fiscal.

The improvement would be driven by Indian airlines deploying additional aircraft and adding new routes in the international segment, as well as their inherent advantage of superior domestic connectivity compared with foreign carriers, CRISIL Ratings said in its report.

India's international passenger traffic grew to around 70 million in fiscal 2024, from a low of 10 million in pandemic-hit fiscal 2021, and has surpassed the pre-pandemic level, according to CRISIL.

The government's focus on making India a hub for tourism is also expected to provide a fillip to inbound traffic.

Indian airlines have added 55 new international routes over the past 15 months, taking their tally beyond 300.

It also said that Indian airlines are also aiming to deploy additional aircraft on the short- and medium-haul international routes and leveraging codeshare agreements with major global airlines to offer connectivity to passengers.

As such, CRISIL said, Indian airlines have certain natural advantages in cornering a larger share of the country's international traffic compared with foreign airlines. *—PTI*

Service activity growth in April among fastest in 14 years: PMI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India's services sector growth eased slightly in April but growth of new business and output remained sharp and among the fastest in 14 years amid favourable economic conditions and strong demand, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index fell from 61.2 in March to 60.8 in April, highlighting one of the strongest growth rates seen in just under 14 years.

Survey members attributed the latest upturn in output to favourable economic conditions, demand strength and rising intakes of new work.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

In addition to buoyant domestic demand, firms noted new business gains from several parts of the world, which collectively underpinned the second-quickest upturn in international sales since the series started in September 2014.

On the job front, a few service providers in India showed an increased appetite for new hires in April, amid rising inflows of new business. However, several companies indicated that payroll numbers were sufficient for current requirements, and the rate of job creation was marginal.

On the price front, wage pressures and higher food prices meanwhile led to another increase in cost burdens, which firms partially passed on to their customers.

Marketing efforts and efficiency gains, alongside plans to price competitively and predictions that demand conditions will remain favourable, boosted optimism, the survey said.

Meanwhile, the HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index moderated to 61.5 in April, from 61.8 in March, the latest reading was one of the highest seen in close to 14 years and signalled a substantial rate of expansion across the private sector.

During April, manufacturers continued to note a stronger increase in new business intakes than service providers. Aggregate sales rose sharply, and at one of the fastest rates since mid-2010. *—PTI*

FRESH FRUITS BUSINESS

Superplum raises USD 15 million from investors

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Agritech startup Superplum, which sells premium fresh fruits, on Monday said it has raised USD 15 million from investors to expand business.

The company said it has completed the Series A funding round to raise USD 15 mn.

The round was led by the company's incoming Chairman, Erik Ragatz, former Partner and current Senior Advisor of the global private equity firm Hellman & Friedman.

He joins a strong group of current investors including Mark Siegel, Dan Rose, Steve Jurvetson, Rick Kimball, Binny Bansal, and Kabir Misra. Superplum, founded in 2019, will use the funds to build infrastructure and transform produce supply chains.

Superplum has built a direct-from-farm produce supply chain, using proprietary technology and cold-chain infrastructure to fundamentally improve how produce is grown and brought to market.

PHOTO: X/@SUPERPLUM

It sells fruits like mangoes, litchis, apples, grapes, cherries, and plums amongst a growing list of products. It also provides traceability, allowing consumers to view pesticide test reports for each batch and see the fruit's journey from farm to table.

\The company's vertically integrated cold chain technology extends shelf lives and enhances fruit quality, expanding produce availability across the country, reducing food waste and ultimately improving farmer incomes.

The company also recently started marketing its branded traceable products globally.

Superplum said it sees great opportunities for premium Indian Mangoes, Lychees, and many more tropical fruits. *—PTI*

Energy Mission IPO to open on 9 May

New Delhi, 6 May

Energy Mission Machineries (India) Ltd on Monday said it has fixed the price band at Rs 131-138 per equity share for its initial public offering which will hit the capital market on Thursday to raise around Rs 41 crore. The public issue of Energy Mission Machineries (India) will open on 9 May and conclude on 13 May, and the shares will be listed on NSE SME's platform, Emerge, company said. The public offer is entirely a fresh issue of 29.82 lakh shares of Rs 10 face value and no Offer for Sale component, Investors can bid for a minimum of 1000 equity shares. *—PTI*

Surge in demand as oil anxiety subsides in India

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

As geopolitical tensions in the Middle East ease, crude oil prices experience a dip while gold prices surge, driven by safe-haven demand and robust buying from Chinese markets.

In April 2024, Brent Crude Oil prices hovered around USD 89.4 per barrel, experiencing a slight ease due to concerns over global demand and a stronger dollar index.

Despite a 16 per cent year-to-date increase attributed to the Middle East crisis, several factors contributed to the temporary dip in oil prices.

Economic slowdown in China and diminishing hopes for US interest rate cuts weighed on global oil demand. A strengthening dollar index exerted downward pressure on oil prices. Surplus in US crude oil inventories surpassed expectations, further pressuring prices down.

Concerns over the Israel-Iran conflict have slightly eased, alleviating supply fears.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

However, hopes for Chinese demand and ongoing tensions between Israel and Iran, coupled with OPEC's unchanged supply policy until the second half of 2024, have provided some support at lower price levels.

On the supply side, mine production increased 4 per cent year-on-year to 893 tonnes, a record first quarter, while recycling jumped 12 per cent year-on-year to 351 tonnes as some investors saw the high price as an opportunity to take profits. *—ANI*

Two foreign funds buy 2.99 lakh shares

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Two foreign funds have bought a total of 2,99,200 shares of MOS Utility Limited (further referred to as "MOS") in a bulk deal on 2 May 2024. Saint Capital Fund and Zinninai Global Fund PCC-Cell Dewcap fund has bought 1,49,200 shares each in the company. Both funds together have bought shares worth Rs. 5.77 crore in the company.

Both funds together have bought shares worth Rs. 5.77 crore in the company.

On 2 May 2024, Saint Capital Fund bought 1,49,200 shares of MOS Utility at Rs. 193.96 per share, investing Rs. 2.90 crore. Saint Capital Fund is a SEBI registered FPI and a boutique Global Investment Fund with prime focus on long term investment in growth companies. The objective is to create wealth over a long period of time through investing in diverse range of assets. *—ANI*

Coal India's contribution to govt rises 6.4%

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

State-owned Coal India Ltd's contribution to the government exchequer increased by 6.4 per cent to Rs 60,140.31 crore in FY24, over the financial year 2022-23.

Coal India Ltd (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, paid Rs 56,524.11 crore to the government exchequer in FY23, according to coal ministry.

Total levies paid to the government in March 2024 also went up by 14.8 per cent to Rs 6,069.18 crore from Rs 5,282.59 crore paid in the corresponding month of FY23.

Of the total Rs 60,140.42 crore paid to the government exchequer in FY24, maximum amount of Rs 13,268.55 crore was made to the state government of Jharkhand, followed by Rs 12,836.20 crore to the Odisha government, Rs 11,890.79 crore to Chhattisgarh, Rs 10,865.96 crore to Madhya Pradesh, and Rs 6,188.89 crore to Maharashtra among others.

Coal India's production and off-take are at 838 MT for FY'25 *PHOTO: ANI*

Apart from this, state governments also benefit from increased employment, land compensation, increased investment in allied infrastructure . Coal India's production and off-take are at 838 MT for FY'25. *—PTI*

ICICI Bank enables UPI in India for NRI customers

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

ICICI Bank on Monday announced that it has enabled instant payment facility UPI for its non-resident Indian (NRI) customers in India through their international mobile numbers.

According to the bank, this will significantly enhance convenience of making everyday payments.

"With this facility, the NRI customers of the bank can make payments for their utility bills, merchant and e-commerce transactions with their international mobile number registered with their NRE/NRO bank account held with ICICI Bank in India," a statement released here by the bank said.

According to the statement, the bank has made this service available through its mobile banking app iMobile Pay. Earlier, NRIs had to register an Indian mobile number with their bank accounts to make UPI payments across 10 countries, namely, the USA, UK, UAE, Canada, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

PHOTO: X/ @ICICIBANK

NRI customers of the bank can make UPI payments by scanning any Indian QR code, send money to a UPI ID or any Indian mobile number or Indian bank account. *—PTI*

INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY

BSNL to launch 4G services in August

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

State-owned BSNL will start rolling out 4G services across the country from August, using completely indigenous technology in line with the government's "Atmanirbhar" policy, according to official sources.

BSNL officials claimed to have recorded peak speed of 40-45 megabit per second on the 4G network which has been rolled out in the premium spectrum band of 700 megahertz (Mhz) as well as in 2,100 Mhz band during the pilot phase.

The company has rolled out 4G services in Punjab using indigenously developed technology by IT company TCS and state-run telecom research organisation C-DoT-led consortium and onboarded around 8 lakh subscribers.

It is in process of deploying 1.12L towers *PHOTO: X/ @BSNLCorporate*

- BSNL officials claimed to have recorded peak speed of 40-45 megabit per second on the 4G network which has been rolled out in the premium spectrum band of 700 (Mhz)

The core network is a collection of network hardware, devices, and software that provides fundamental services in a telecommunication network. Telecom regulator Trai in a recent paper explained core as part of a network that offers the functionality of aggregation, call control, switching, authentication, charging, gateway functionality, etc.

TCS, Tejas Networks and government-owned ITI have bagged orders worth about Rs 19,000 crore from BSNL for deploying 4G network which is upgradable to 5G.

In a recent earnings call, Tejas Networks Executive Director and chief operating officer Arnob Roy said BSNL's mobile network is getting deployed across zones.

He said that wherever the C-DOT core is not available on the BSNL network, the equipment is getting integrated to the existing core.

BSNL is in the process of deploying 1.12 lakh towers for 4G and 5G services across India. *—PTI*

Pak cricket: Babar Azam backs Gary Kirsten

LAHORE, 6 MAY

Pakistan limited overs skipper Babar Azam is optimistic that Gary Kirsten's appointment as head coach of Pakistan's white ball side will certainly improve its performance. The South African was roped in as the team's limited overs head coach last month on a two-year contract, and this would be his third outing as an international coach, having guided India (2008-11) and South Africa (2011-13).

"He (Kirsten) is a very experienced coach, and his presence should be beneficial for us all. He is already taking a lot of interest in the planning for the World Cup and discussing strategy with the team management," Babar told a media conference in Lahore on Monday. Babar said Kirsten was in touch with the side daily, receiving reports about what they were doing and how they were planning things. *—PTI*

Jyoti to lead Indian Jr women's hockey team for Europe

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Defender Jyoti Singh was on Monday named the captain of the Indian Junior Women's team by Hockey India with midfielder Sakshi Rana as her deputy in a 22-member squad which will tour Europe from 21 to 29 May. India will play six matches across three nations against Belgium, Germany and two club teams in the Netherlands -- Bredase Hockey Vereniging Push and Oranje Rood.

"There's great camaraderie in the squad. All of us have gotten to know each other pretty well during the camp. Everyone here is very skilful and talented," Jyoti said in a HI release. "It will be fun and a good learning experience playing abroad against other top-quality teams." *—PTI*

155 police officers injured at German soccer match

BERLIN, 6 MAY

Some 155 police officers were injured in fighting involving Dynamo Berlin and Energie Cottbus fans over the weekend – most of them from the use of tear gas. Berlin police said 116 officers suffered injuries from tear-gas use, 28 from assaults and 11 after being hit by pyrotechnics fired by supporters after the fourth-division match at Dynamo's ground. "I absolutely condemn it," Berlin's senator for sport, Iris Spranger, said Monday. "The club has to tell us now what it wants to do with its fan base. This is taxpayers' money that we had to spend, with 1,000 police officers for security." *—AP*

Pendrith holds nerve to win maiden PGA title

TEXAS, 6 MAY

Canadian Taylor Pendrith held his nerve with a birdie at the final hole to win his first PGA Tour title at the CJ Cup Byron Nelson in Texas. Pendrith trailed Ben Kohles by one shot approaching the last after the American had birdied both the 16th and 17th. But a bad drive from Kohles on the 18th left him under pressure. After he missed a par putt, which could have secured a playoff, he was punished by the coolness of Pendrith. Pendrith had moved to 22 under for the tournament after a birdie at the 12th but he failed to pick up another shot for the next five holes as Kohles made his late charge to move onto 23 under. But when the 32-year-old Canadian, who had led by one shot going into the final round but who has struggled with wrist and shoulder injuries, was presented with his winning opportunity courtesy of a three foot putt, he made no mistake. *—BBC News*

Rublev downs Aliassime to win Madrid Open title

Rublev overcomes fever, praises doctors after winning Madrid Open for the first time

MADRID, 6 MAY

Despite sleepless nights struggling with a fever, Andrey Rublev found a way to fight back and win the Madrid Open for the first time.

Rublev was feeling sick all week but rallied to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in three sets on Sunday and clinch his second Masters 1000 title. Rublev won 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 after Auger-Aliassime double-faulted on the last point of the final at the clay-court tournament in the Spanish capital.

"I would say this is the most proud title of my career," Rublev said. "I was almost dead every day. I was not sleeping at night. The last three, four days I didn't sleep." Rublev gave "full credit to the doctors," who were "doing some tricky things" just to make sure he could play.

"I have no words," the eighth-ranked Rublev said. "If you knew what I had been through in the past nine days you would not imagine that I would be able to win a title. The 26-year-old Russian won his first Masters 1000 title at Monte Carlo last year. Auger-Aliassime was playing in his first final at this level.

Rublev entered Madrid on a four-match losing streak after early exits at Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo and Barcelona. One of his victories in Madrid came in the quarterfinals against home-crowd favourite Carlos Alcaraz.

He now has 16 career titles, and two this season after Hong Kong in January. He had arrived with a 5-1 record against Auger-Aliassime, including a win in their sole matchup on clay. Auger-Aliassime's path to the final saw second-ranked Jannik Sinner withdraw because of an injury ahead of the quarterfinals, and Jiri Lehecka retired against the Canadian in the first set of the semifinals.

Other injuries hit the men's draw in Madrid, starting with Novak Djokovic's withdrawal before the tournament. Daniil Medvedev retired in the quarterfinals, while Alcaraz was hampered by a sore right arm and Rafael Nadal bowed out of what was likely his last appearance in his home country. *—AP*

Andrey Rublev posses for a photo after winning the Mimai Open 2024 against Felix Auger Aliassime in Miami **PHOTO: X/@MutuaMadridOpen**

Terror threat to T20 WC, reveals Trinidad PM

PORT OF SPAIN, 6 MAY

The T20 World Cup in the Americas has received a terror threat, Trinidad's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley has revealed even as the ICC asserted that a "comprehensive and robust security plan" is in place to "mitigate any risks" to the showpiece beginning 1 June.

The tournament -- featuring 20 teams, including India -- is scattered across nine venues, six of them in the West Indies.

As of now, the threat, according to media reports, is specific to the West Indies, which aside from some preliminary matches, will be hosting the entire Super 8 stage along with the semifinals and the final on 29 June.

"Unfortunately, the threat of terrorism in its many and varied expressions is an ever-present danger in the world of the 21st century," Rowley was quoted as saying by 'Trinidad Daily Express' here. Rowley did not name any organisation but reports here stated that the Islamic State made the threat through its propaganda channel.

The ICC responded to the development with a statement assuring preparedness. "Safety and security of everyone at the event is our number one priority and we have a comprehensive and robust security plan in place," a spokesperson of the global body said in a statement issued to PTI.

"We work closely with authorities in our host countries and continually monitor and evaluate the global landscape to ensure appropriate plans are in place to mitigate any risks identified to our event." The World Cup matches in the West Indies will be held in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago. The US leg will feature games in Florida, New York and Texas. *—PTI*

ICC trophy **PHOTO: ICC**

Arsenal need Tottenham favour in the title race

ARSENAL, 6 MAY

Four straight losses. The team's worst run of results for 20 years. Two clean sheets since the end of October.

Those looking at Tottenham to provide a late twist in the Premier League title race are, given the current evidence, going to be disappointed. Manchester City's May 14 trip to the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, for its next-to-last game of the season, appeared to many the last possible stumbling block for the champions in their bid to reel in Arsenal and secure an unprecedented fourth straight title.

After all, not only have Spurs plenty to play for — they're still just about fighting for Champions League qualification — but they haven't lost, or even conceded a goal, against City in their four league meetings at Tottenham's new stadium since it opened in 2019. Arsenal, though, is surely losing hope of a favour from its north London neighbour.

Similarly, Tottenham fans might be starting to lose hope that Ange Postecoglou is the man to bring a winning culture to the club without a trophy since 2008.

- It all started so well for the first-ever Australian to coach in the Premier League. Tottenham was top of the league in early November, unbeaten and playing the kind of attacking football its supporters always crave

It all started so well for the first-ever Australian to coach in the Premier League. Tottenham was top of the league in early November, unbeaten and playing the kind of attacking football its supporters always crave. No manager had ever taken 26 points from his first 10 games in the Premier League before Postecoglou came along with a high defensive line and an aggressive, front-foot style.

Fast-forward six months and it feels like the season cannot end soon enough for Spurs, who are limping to the finish line, and Postecoglou, who is beginning to understand the size of the task he took on almost a year ago. *—AP*

All eyes on Fraser-McGurk and Pant against Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Delhi Capitals would require Rishabh Pant's killer instinct and Jake Fraser McGurk's unbelievable flair in their bid to stay alive in the IPL playoff race when they square off against a rampaging Rajasthan Royals in a must-win game here on Tuesday.

The Capitals have been inconsistent so far, winning five and losing six of their last 11 games. While winning the remaining three games is a must for Pant's men, even that will only take them to 16 points which might not be enough to qualify for the last four stage of the tournament.

Apart from KKR (16 from 11 games) and RR (16 from 10 games), there are at least three teams, namely Chennai Super Kings (12 from 11), Sunrisers Hyderabad (12 from 10 games) and Lucknow Super Giants (12 from 11 games), who can go beyond the 16-point mark.

Given the situation, DC's best might not be enough for qualification, but Pant would look to only "control the controllables," a policy advocated by his mentor Mahendra Singh Dhoni. On a flat Feroz Shah Kotla deck, the challenge will be two-fold for the DC skipper. At one end, he would want the Khaleel Ahmeds, Ishant Sharmas and Kuldeep Yadavs to restrict the Yashasvi Jaiswals, Sanju Samsons, and Riyan Parags to a manageable level but then with barely 60-metre boundary on one side, it will be a challenge to stop a team, whose jersey's colour (Pink) resembles their overall health.

With 380 runs to his credit and three impactful half-centuries in his kitty, Pant would like to once again perform, especially when his team has been pushed to the wall. He will have new Aussie sensation Fraser-McGurk, who has gone off the boil in the last couple of games. *—PTI*

The Capitals have been inconsistent so far, winning five and losing six of their last 11 games **PHOTO: ANI**

TODAY'S MATCH

DELHI CAPITALS

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Time: 7.30 pm
Where To Watch: Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium:
Arun Jaitley stadium, Delhi

Indian women's, men's relay teams qualify for Olympics

NASSAU, 6 MAY

The Indian men's and women's 4x400m relay teams qualified for Paris Olympics after finishing second in their respective second-round heats at the World Athletics Relays here on Monday.

In the women's competition, the quartet of Rupal Chaudhary, M R Poovamma, Jyothika Sri Dandi and Subha Venkatesan clocked 3 minutes and 29.35 seconds to finish second behind Jamaica (3:28.54) in heat number one to book a Paris Games ticket.

Later, the men's squad of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Arokia Rajiv and Amoj Jacob finished with a collective timing of 3 minutes and 3.23 seconds to also finish second in their heat, behind USA (2:59.95).

The top two teams in each of the three heats in the second round were to qualify for the Olympics to be held from July 26 to August 11. It was a sort of a surprise that the women's 4x400m team qualified for the Olympics as the focus was more on the men's 4x400m team which has broken Asian record in back-to-back global events -- Tokyo Olympics and 2023 World Championships -- as well as winning 2023 Asian Games gold. The Indian men's 4x400m team was on third position when anchor-leg runner Jacob took the baton from Arokia but the Delhi boy ran a fantastic race to overtake his Mexican opponent and finish second. *—PTI*

India Women defeat B'desh by 56 runs

SYLHET, 6 MAY

India continued their dominant run against Bangladesh with a 56-run win via Duckworth-Lewis method in the rain curtailed fourth women's T20 here on Monday.

A late start and then over an hour-long delay due to persistent rain and hail meant that the contest had to be shortened. Harmanpreet Kaur (38) and Richa Ghosh (24) shared a 44-run stand to help India post 122 for 6 against Bangladesh after persistent rain reduced the contest to 14 overs a side.

The hosts had to chase 125 in 14 overs under the DLS method to secure their first win of the series. But the batters, barring opener Dilara Akter (21), Rubya Haider (13) and Shorifa Khatun (11 not out), failed to reach double digits as they kept losing wicket in clusters. India handed a maiden debut to 33-year-old leg spinner Asha Shobhana, who returned with figures of 2/18 in three overs.

Senior all-rounder Deepti Sharma (2/13) picked two wickets while Radha Yadav (1/12) and pacer Pooja Vastrakar (1/15) accounted for Vone batter each as India restricted Bangladesh to 68/7. India lead the five match series 4-0.

Earlier, playing her 300th international game, Kaur stitched a crucial partnership with the big-hitting Ghosh (24) to inflate India's total. The duo came out after the rain break with positive intent and shared as many as eight boundaries and a six in a span of 28 deliveries. India lost opener Shafali Verma (2) early on. Shorifa Khatun bowled a fuller length ball and the opener tried to clear the in-field but couldn't middle it as the ball went flying in the hands of Ritu Moni at extra cover. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

FORMULA 1

Norris' maiden win 'a long time coming'

Lando Norris wins the Miami Grand Prix **PHOTO:X/@MCLARENF1**

MIAMI, 6 MAY

Lando Norris said his first Formula 1 win was "a long time coming" after his Miami Grand Prix victory.

The Briton, 24, pulled away to win from championship leader Max Verstappen, after taking advantage of a safety car period to pit for tyres and retain the lead. His victory came in his 110th grand prix start and after previously finishing on the podium 15 times without winning, which was an F1 record.

"A long day, a tough race, but finally on top so I'm over the moon," said McLaren's Norris. "I'm so happy for my whole team. I've finally been able to deliver for them." Norris, who has driven for McLaren since his F1 debut as a 19-year-old in 2019, was eliminated at the first corner in the Miami sprint race on Saturday. He came close to victory during the 2021 Russian Grand Prix but lost the lead with four laps. It is McLaren's first victory since the 2021 Italian Grand Prix when Daniel Ricciardo took the win ahead of Norris. Verstappen, who has won four times while dominating the season so far, finished nearly eight seconds behind Norris and said the Briton was "flying". *—BBC News*